FAUNA OF INDIA CHECKLIST

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ONLINE VERSION 1.0

ONYCHOPHORA

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ZOOLOGICAL SURVEY OF INDIA
Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change

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Introduction: Onychophora commonly known as velvet worms, walking worms or peripatusdue to velvety texture and wormlike appearances or caterpillar like appearances. These animals size ranges from 0.5 to 15 cm in length, elongate, soft body with small head. They show various colour pattern on their body such as orange, red, brown, green, blue, gold and occasionally patterned with other colors. The end of oral papillae contains slime gland which produces powerful adhesive. They can shoot adhesive slime up to 30 cm to catch their prey such as beetles, worms, snails and other insects.

Global diversity:The order encompasses more than 183 described species globally.

Diversity in India: In India, only one species is documented.

Diversity in States: Only one species is reported from Assam.

Endemism: One species of Onychophora (*Typhloperipatus williamsoni* Kemp, 1913) belonging to the family peripatidae is reported as endemic to India.

Habitat: Onychophorans are terrestrial, found leaf litter, under tree trunks and stones. They distributed in rainforests of the tropical, temperate zones and showing circumtropical distribution. They are photophobic, and prefer dark environment with high air humidity.

Ecological Significance: Onychophoran species are important predators for primarily various spiders and centipedes, along with rodents and birds.

Human Significance: No human significance has been reported yet, but researchers believe that these animals are useful for biological research to study evolution and phylogenetic of these animals.

Threatened species: No species of onychophora from India is assessed for IUCN threatened categories.

Protected Species as per WPA: Onychophora is not listed under any schedules of Indian Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.

Species under CITES: There is no species enlisted under the CITES Appendices.

Invasive alien species: No onychophora species is reported to be invasive in Indian waters.

Gap areas: Onychophora species are poorly documented. The documented species is known only from type locality.

Systematic list:

1. *Typhloperipatus williamsoni* Kemp, 1913

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