
PARENTAL CARE IN A CENTIPEDE*

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Parental care is so well known among arthropods (spiders, scorpions, crustaceans, many insects, etc.) that one might reasonably expect it in centipedes. But in a wide reading of pertinent literature I have failed to note a recorded case. This can mean only one of two things: either (1) the phenomenon has been largely neglected by students of animal habits or (2) it is rare or unknown. In any case, it seems wise to record the following observations.

On May 5, 1948, along a creek bed near Camp Classen, Arbuckle Moun-

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tains, Murray County, Oklahoma, I found two small centipedes under a flat stone. Each was wrapped about numerous pearly-white eggs. On disturbance, one centipede left the eggs and escaped to the grass. The other coiled more tightly about the eggs, its body very nearly concealing them.

This animal with its eggs was collected. The abandoned eggs of the other centipede were placed in the same bottle along with moist earth from under the stone and transported to Norman. The animal in the bottle "adopted" the eggs of the other centipede, adding them to its own. It remained for several weeks coiled about the eggs. On May 30 the eggs had hatched and the old centipede continued to "brood" the young for four days, thereafter paying them no attention.

More detailed observations were not made due to lack of time. The species involved is still unknown although the adult was retained in order that it could eventually be identified. It was not the larger *Scolopendra heros* which is abundant in this habitat.
