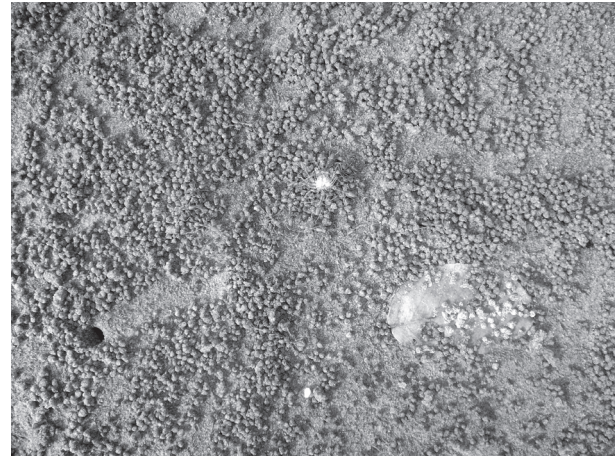
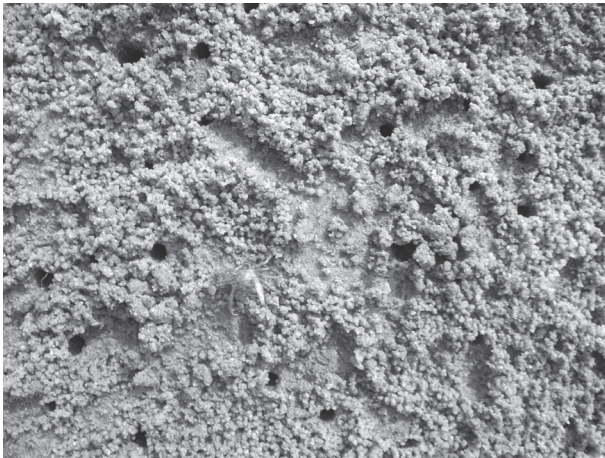


# Predation of droves of soldier crabs (*Dotilla myctiroides*) by red fire ants *Solenopsis invicta*

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Soldier crab *Dotilla myctiroides* is a known burrower and form dense aggregations called droves around tropical muddy or sandy beaches including mangrove swamps. Due to their burrowing and feeding activities, one can see deposition of pseudofaecal and excavated pellets of moist sand around their burrows. Hence they are also known as sand bubbler crab. During the low tide they remain buried inside the burrows. In one of the routine observations on the seagrass flats near the mangrove stands of Kadalundi, near Kozhikode during low tide, we could observe the red fire ants inhabiting on the reeds and shrubs growing along the beach were dragging live soldier crabs from their burrow (Figs 1-3) and taking them to their nest for



consumption. This could be seen during the subsequent observation trips during the low tide at the seagrass flats. This invasion of red ants of

terrestrial ecosystem to the burrows of *Dotilla* crab of intertidal zone adjoining seagrass ecosystem and the possible threat to *Dotilla* due to regular and

mass predation is reported for the first time. *Dotilla* plays an important role as a sediment mover in this very specialized habitat.