

The Spider Club NEWS

March 2021



Vol 37, No.1

“The Spider Club provides a fun, responsible, social learning experience, centred on spiders, their relatives, and on nature in general.”



AUTUMN EDITION

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About the Spider Club

The Spider Club of Southern Africa is a non-profit organisation. Our aim is to encourage an interest in arachnids – especially spiders and scorpions – and to promote this interest and the study of these animals by all suitable means.

Membership is open to anyone – people interested in joining the club may apply to any committee member for information.

Field outings, day visits, arachnid surveys and demonstrations, workshops, and exhibits are arranged from time to time. A diary of events and outings is published at the end of this newsletter.

Contact us

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at “The Spider Club of Southern Africa”

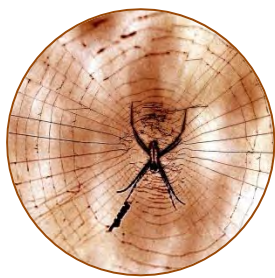
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Acknowledgements:

Our sincere gratitude goes to the following people for this edition of the newsletter:

- All the photographers of the photos used in this edition. Without you, these pages would be very dull.
- Astri Leroy, of course, for all her contributions, and informing me of any new content.
- Jarrod Todd, for being involved in reporting on the spider walks.
- Everyone on SCSA and its sister groups for all the interesting content.
- All the readers of this newsletter, and all the positive feedback we receive. Of course, keep the negative feedback coming, so that we can improve on this newsletter.



FROM THE HUB

Out with the old, in with the new

Wait till you see the new look Spider Club News – Rudolph (Rudi) has come up with another wonderful innovation and I know he has more great ideas up his sleeve. So our “old” Spider Club news front page is out and the new is in. The photos taken by you, our members, are awesome and the content of the newsletter gets better and more interesting all the time. Huge thanks to Rudi Steenkamp, our newsletter editor and out-of-the-box thinker.

Have a look at the report on the Spider Walk at Oori Private Nature Reserve. We again had a full house with 33 people. Thank you, Henning, for helping with the admin when you noticed I was rather overwhelmed! You are so much better than me at remembering people’s names; I become overwhelmed when there are more than 20 new names to remember! It keeps amazing me how popular our spider walks have become. The average attendance used to be around eight people; sometimes more, often less; so more than 30 attendees is wonderful. We welcomed so many new faces on the 14th of March and I hope they join us again and again. Jacky Collier, who left us for good on the 16th to live in Portugal, has already sent me a photo of a Portuguese spitting spider!

Perhaps the great attendance at our events is because they are now quite widely “marketed” with other organisations picking up our Facebook and other notices but I fervently hope it is also because many people are waking up to the fact that the little things underpin the workings of the world we rely on. It is a fact that invertebrates are absolutely vital and that without them, everything will unravel.

I’ve been part of The Spider Club of Southern Africa since 1975, which makes me a “certain age”, so I consider Rudi one of the “new”. Another “new” person is our webmaster, Desiré Pelser. Thank you for taking on the website; it is really nice and the Spiders of the Month photos are outstanding!

Over the years I have physically met some wonderful people because of spiders, literally travelled the world because of spiders and count many, if not most, of my very best friends as “spider people”. There are many of you, however, whom I have never physically met and probably never will but you are still friends, my buddies, and the people I can talk to most easily. For example, although I have met neither Rudi nor Desiré, I count them as really good friends

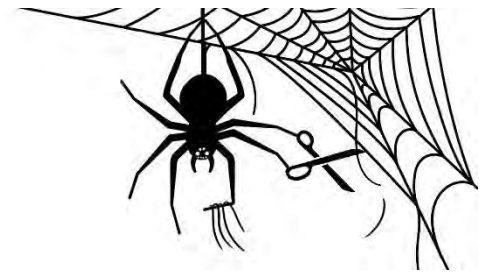
Once more I am putting on record that I wish to resign as chairperson; I’ve been involved in the running of the club since 1975, sometimes more involved and sometimes less so. We now have a very capable group of people (the admins) and duties need to be allocated for the efficient running of the club. After the Easter holiday season, I will contact all the admins and perhaps organise a face-to-face meeting after a Spider Walk or other event and invite members to register for a Zoom general meeting.

Regards

Astri

Roodepoort 23/03/2021

Snippets



New front page for newsletter

Some of you may have noticed that we have a slightly different look for our front page. Since we are a quarterly/seasonal newsletter, we thought it would look good to have a spider drawing for each season.

These pictures are designed by Joleen Coetzee, who also designed the African Snakebite Institute's logo.

The spider for this autumn edition is a black-and-white box kite spider (*Isoxya cicatricosa*).

Watch this space to see what she comes up for the other three seasons.

Spider Club of Zimbabwe holds first spider walk

The Spider Club of Zimbabwe recently held its first spider walk in Bulawayo and Harare on 14 March.

According to Jonathan Whitaker, who organised the walk in Harare, "Attendance was good, with 35 attendees split between the Bulawayo walk in the Matobo Hills and the Harare walk in the National Botanical Gardens. Both groups found about 30 species thanks to many sharp eyes and some strategic sweep-netting. We are hoping to host more walks going forward – join our Facebook group at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/spiderclubzw>, or sign up as a member to stay updated so you don't miss out."

Another loss for the spider community

The following email was circulated by the International Society of Arachnology (ISA) after the passing of Michael Roberts:

"Dear ISA members,

I'm sorry to have to announce the recent death of Michael Roberts, who was probably best known

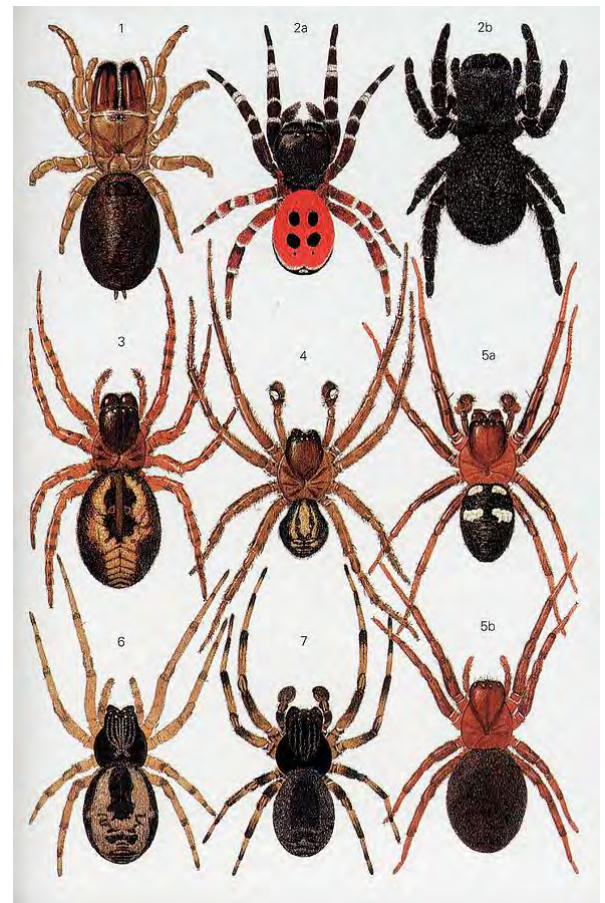
for his beautiful illustrations in the book series "The spiders of Great Britain and Ireland" and the related Collins guide "Spiders of Britain and Northern Europe".

He also collaborated with John Murphy on the book "Spider families of the world and their spinnerets".

My condolences to all who knew Michael.

Yours sincerely,

Jason Dunlop (Secretariat)"



Some of Michael Roberts' drawings

Mike Green's "coffee table book"

Mike Green, whose informative pieces, titled Mike's Musings, featured in the last two newsletters, is planning to put all his pieces

together into a “coffee table book”. This is what he had to say:

“As some of you might know, I am busy with a coffee table book on spiders. The draft of about 195 pages (A4 size) is basically complete and will have about 204 photos with lots and lots of very interesting and easy-to-understand information.

Why this book on spiders? Every second person you meet fears spiders and most just want to kill on sight. This is mainly due to the many silly “old wives’ tales” and the total lack of education on spiders. In some small way I want to try and help educate the average person. In the past, when I have suggested that they purchase a field guide, they said, “No, thank you!” It was clear that they found the field guides too technical and hard to understand for the so-called “uneducated”.

My book is not meant in any way to compete with or replace any of the amazing field guides already on the market; they are of immense value for anyone wishing to study our little friends. I have therefore tried to make my book a “wow” and easy-to-read book for the people who shy away from books with “scientific jargon” as referred to by the broad public.

I am busy discussing my book with several publishers and printers, versus self-publishing. My aim is to keep the book affordable to the average person on the street. Hopefully it will be on the shelves by July this year.

Regards

Mike Green”

Two new species named after SA photographer

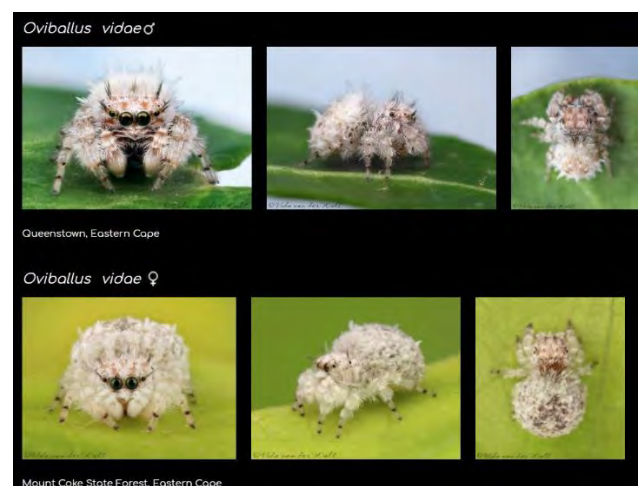
Vida van der Walt is well known on the spider groups, not only for her sparkling and always helpful personality, but also for her stunning photos of especially jumping spiders. She was recently honoured by having two species named after her, namely *Diphya vanderwaltae*¹ (family

Tetragnathidae) and *Oviballus vidae*² (family Salticidae).

It was especially the latter species that drew people’s attention from all over the world.

When I asked Galina Azarkina, who found the species in 2015, about her reasoning behind the name, she stated:

“When I found these spiders back in 2015 in the ASR collection, I thought ‘what a strange-looking spider! What is this?’ A bit later Charles Haddad contacted me and told me about new exemplars of ‘fungi spiders’. At the same time he sent some specimens to Vida and she called this species ‘sheep-spider’. Well, after Vida received specimens, she took shots and published them on Facebook and on her site. Then she sent me a lot of messages how people are fascinated with this spider! So, when it was time to start to work on this spider I had no choice but to name this spider after Vida, a person who made this spider famous worldwide! And here’s a touchy moment – I told about it to Vida (three years before it was published) and she was so excited, and immediately told Johannes (her husband) about it. It’s really an honour to name a spider after someone so devoted to jumping spiders like Vida is!”



Male and female *Oviballus vidae*, from Vida’s website

¹ Omelko, M.M., Marusik, Y.M. & Lyle, R. 2020. A survey of *Diphya* Nicolet, 1849 (Araneae: Tetragnathidae) from South Africa. *Zootaxa*, 4899(1): 259-279.

² Azarkina, G.N. & Haddad, C.R. 2020. Partial revision of the Afrotropical Ballini, with the description of seven new genera (Araneae: Salticidae). *Zootaxa*, 4899(1): 15-92.

25 new Madagascan huntsman species named

Peter Jaeger, who last year described a new huntsman genus from Madagascar, named *Thunberga*, after Swedish environmental activist Greta Thunberg, has described 25 more species³ (bringing the total to 29).

Peter has a tendency to name spiders after people he has immense respect for (from well-known people like David Bowie to lesser-known people in the field like Prof. Lutz Thilo Wasserthal). This case was no different, and some of the species were named after inspiring women (just in time for International Women's Day). Here are just three of the ones he named (taken from his Facebook page):



³ Jaeger, P. 2021. Enigmatic "love bites" and an indirect mating plug: Revision of *Thunberga* Jäger, 2020 with *The Spider Club News: March 2021 – Volume 37, No. 1*

description of new species (Araneae: Sparassidae: Heteropodinae). *Arachnology*, 18(7), 718-765.

Oryx with spiders living between its horns

Jess Isden recently shared a few photos of an oryx (gemsbok) with what appears to be community-nest spiders (*Stegodyphus* sp.) in their web between its horns. Whether it was accidental or intentional, we will probably never know, but it's an interesting sighting nonetheless. This is what Jess posted:

"Good morning, can anyone shed light on the spiders which make these extraordinary webs in the horns of gemsbok?"

At first I thought the gemsbok must have walked through the web, but on closer inspection it was clear that it was much more intricate than that, and there were living spiders in the webs too. Seen on several animals. They could have easily wiped the webs off their face and horns, yet seem to tolerate it. We also saw the same animal multiple times over 4 days with the web still intact!

Seen in the Central Kalahari Game Reserve, Botswana."



© Jess Isden

Thousands of spiders flee floods in Australia

Residents of New South Wales recently found that they had more to deal with than the worst floods recorded in 50 years when thousands (if not millions) of spiders (mostly wolf spiders) fled the floods, looking for higher ground, such as people's fences, walls, etc. The Queensland Museum tweeted the following:



Wondering what this sea of spiders is made up of? 🕷️
Arachnologist Dr Robert Raven said they are wolf spiders trying escape floodwaters. They typically live in burrows in the ground and eventually they will try and escape the water by climbing up plants.

📷 Matt Lovenfosse



8:01 AM · Mar 22, 2021



Spider drawing competition

How well can you or your child or anyone you know draw a spider? How long has it been since you last drew anything? Have you ever tried drawing a spider?

Well, here's your chance to show off your skills, or entertain us with your lack of drawing skills and rather your sense of humour or creativity.

I think it would be a fun and informative exercise, not only for children, but also for some adults. I know that I will be submitting my best pathetic drawing of a spider...

We can call this a "competition", but the only prize will be bragging rights, a mention on our Facebook group and on our website, and a dedicated spot in our quarterly newsletter (starting from the June/Winter edition).

Submissions will be made to a separate album on our Facebook page, which will be available from April.

The theme is: WINTER SPIDER (such as a spider ice skating, huddling in front of a fire, in a snowball fight, etc.). Go crazy with this theme, but keep it civil.

We will divide the “winners” in categories, such as best drawings in age group, as well as funniest drawing, most creative drawing, most popular drawing, etc.

The winners will be announced in June.

Spider Walks

KLIPDRIFT DAM: POTCHEFSTROOM –27 FEBRUARY 2021

by Jarrod Michael Todd

This spider walk started a bit differently, where some of us actually got there late Friday afternoon for an entire weekend of spider hunting. Friday didn't start off with much spider hunting as it was pouring with rain when we got there. Luckily, however, towards the evening it cleared up quite nicely for a braai. The braai area was down by the pool, and there were some shade net lapas all around for sitting under. Once we were all settled and the braai was lit, Garrie and myself decided to go and see what spiders we could find at night. And boy, we did not have to walk far.

We walked over to the first shade net and found a red-spot hairy field spider (*Neoscona triangula*) setting up her web in the corner. We then walked over to the next corner and found quite an interesting spider that we suspect was *Zygiella x-notata*, but a thorough examination will have to be done to confirm this.

We found a few other spiders that night, some long-jawed water orb weavers (*Tetragnatha* spp.) and plenty of grass orb weavers from the super common *Kilima* sp., to the quite rare *Mahemba hewitti*.

The next morning started off with a lovely breakfast for all those who were already there. While breakfast was cooking, I couldn't help but go search around our chalets for some spiders! I went to the closest patch of flowers, looking for any petals curled up or leaves folded over. And there it was, one flower with the petal curled upwards... and staying like that, definitely a spider. I looked at the flower and there sitting waiting for some poor critter to land on the flower was a beautiful yellow flower crab spider (*Thomisus stenningi*). I looked for some of the orb weavers from the night before but they were completely gone. I really looked and nothing, not a single soul in sight; it's crazy how they disappear as if they were never there.

We then started eating breakfast and the others for the spider walk started arriving. We gobbled up the food and we all prepared for the walk. We headed out down a rough road along grasses, sweeping with the nets as we went along. Christiaan and Nandus were in the grasses lifting rocks and rubble. This is where they found our first spiders for the day and one of my favourite spiders, a spitting spider (*Scytodes* sp.). Spitting spiders suit their name well, as they have silk glands in their heads, and can "spit" webbing at prey to immobilise them.

Sweeping in the grass, we again found many of the *Kilima* sp. grass orb weavers. There were also plenty of long-jawed water orb weavers, more of the males than females, and quite a variety too. There were so many different creatures under rocks and in between the grasses: caterpillars and butterflies, hammerhead worms, scorpions and blind snakes, beetles and plenty of dragonflies and damselflies.

The group split up into smaller groups and some headed a bit further on than others. I went further on as I wanted to reach the dam in the hope of finding a fishing spider (*Nilus* sp.), but to no avail. So the rest of us headed back to the chalets as well. Getting back after the walk is always the fun part for me, as I get to take photos of all these spiders we collected. We take the photos on a little setup and then safely release the spiders back into the grasses.

And that was the weekend walk at Klipdrift Dam. Some images from the walk are below, enjoy!



Hewitt's mahembea grass orb weaver (*Mahembea hewitti*). Photo: Jarrod Todd



Missing-sector orb weaver (*Zygiella x-notata*). Photo: Jarrod Todd



Female (right) and male (left) long-jawed water orb weavers (*Tetragnatha* sp.). Photos: Jarrod Todd



Tree velvet spider (*Gandanameno* sp.). Photo: Jarrod Todd



Yellow flower crab spider (*Thomisus stenningi*). Photos: Jarrod Todd



Spitting spiders (*Scytodes* spp.). Photos: Jarrod Todd



Baboon spider (*Harpactira hamiltoni*). Photos: Jarrod Todd



Left: Hairy field spider (*Neoscona* sp.). **Right:** White running spider (*Gephyrota glauca*). Photos: Jarrod Todd



The attendees going through the collected spiders, and taking photos. The spiders were released after they were recorded.

The Oori Private Game reserve is a stunning piece of restored and carefully managed natural veld, mostly rolling grassland with the Krokodil River running through it. The river is augmented by one of the largest natural springs in Gauteng, which bubbles up on a neighbouring property. Most of the original plains game have been kept or reintroduced and are thriving. In fact, one bull giraffe is so comfortable there that he is reluctant to move over when confronted by a small blue car – mine!

We met on the property of our hostess, Shannon Rogotzki, about 5 km from the main gate, and she had been out early to put signs all along our route so that no one got lost! Thanks, Shannon, and thanks for your enthusiasm and hospitality. The spacious stoep and swimming pool in your garden were much appreciated when we returned hot and tired from our walk.

There was a wonderful turnout of 30 people, from little five-year-old Liam Huigsloot to 77-year-old me. There were lots of new friends and many “regulars”, although some “regulars” were missing, such as the Wright clan and sorely missed Caren but there’s always a next time. Sadly, we said goodbye to Jacky Collier who left for Portugal, for good. Now it is over to 13-year-old Lebo to give her impression of her first Spider Walk:

Lebo (Matshidiso) Majola

Spiders are one of the most feared animals on the planet, no matter how big or how small, venomous or not, they are still feared by many. I myself am still scared of spiders but on Sunday that all changed! I had a wonderful time during the walk, so much so that I kind of forgot about my fear. At first, I was a little scared because I didn’t really know what to expect, but we saw some pretty interesting spiders, scorpions, and other bugs. This experience made me change my mind about spiders in the most positive way.

Spiders are mostly feared because of their appearance and because of the bad stories people tell about them. Some people find spiders cute or pretty and some don’t. Most people don’t like spiders because they’re afraid they might bite or jump on them, but some spiders jump on you because they want to or they’re just curious and want to explore. On the other hand, some spiders that bite you feel threatened because you’re approaching them in a threatening way or you’re intruding in their personal space, so it’s probably self-defence!

There are almost 50 000 species of spiders around the world. Each spider has their own unique way of living; some species are endangered and we need to protect them because spiders are very vital to our ecosystem. They are very interesting creatures, and we can learn a lot about them like how they survive, their eating methods, etc.

Some people catch and release spiders to study them to learn more about them and to teach others that they mean no harm to anyone except their food (prey). Spiders are gentle creatures even though it does not seem so, but they are and I had a wonderful time looking for them! I think I should do it more often so that I can learn more about these wonderful creatures of the earth.

At the end of the day, I still couldn’t believe I survived walking 12 km with spiders and bugs around me and not to mention the sun, but overall I had a wonderful time discovering spiders and bugs that I didn’t even know existed!

Jarrodd Todd and Johan Heyns took many photos both in the field and using the table on the stoep. They listed the spiders found and with their excellent photos and consultation both on the day and afterwards. See the list below.



Unknown spider. Maybe *Propostira* sp. (Theridiidae), or perhaps one of the tree sheet web spiders (Cyatholipidae).
Photo: Jarrod Todd



Unknown theridiid. Some suggestions were *Dipoena* or *Phycosoma* sp. Photo: Jarrod Todd



Left: Long-tailed garbage-line-web spider (*Cyclosa elongata*). **Right:** Wolf spider (Lycosidae) Photos: Jarrod Todd



Left: Grass lynx spider (*Oxyopes* sp.). **Right:** Silver marsh spider (*Leucauge* sp.) Photos: Jarrod Todd



Masked flower crab spider (*Thomisus blandus*). Photo: Johan Heyns



Grass crab spider (*Runcinia* sp.). Photo: Johan Heyns



Left: Tailed orb weaver (*Eriovixia excelsa*). **Right:** Green hairy field spider (*Neoscona rufipalpis*). Photos: Johan Heyns

Jarrod's list of spiders found during the Spider Walk on 14 March 2021 at Oori Private Game Reserve is as follows:

FAMILY	SPECIES
Araneidae	<i>Argiope trifasciata</i> <i>Cyclosa elongatus</i> <i>Eriovixia excelsa</i> <i>Larinioides</i> sp. <i>Neoscona moreli</i> <i>Neoscona</i> spp. <i>Trichonephila fenestrata</i> <i>T. senegalensis annulata</i>
Cheiracanthiidae	<i>Cheiracanthium</i> sp.
Ctenidae	<i>Ctenus pulchriventris</i>
Eresidae	<i>Dresserus</i> sp.
Gnaphosidae	Unknown
Lycosidae	<i>Hogna</i> sp.
Oxyopidae	<i>Oxyopes</i> sp.
Pisauridae	<i>Euprosthops bayaonianus</i> <i>Euprosthopsis vuattouxi</i>
<u>Philodromidae</u>	<i>Philodromus</i> sp. <i>Tibellus</i> sp.
Salticidae	<i>Baryphas ahenus</i> <i>Heliophanus</i> sp. and others
Tetragnathidae	<i>Leucauge levanderi</i> <i>Tetragnatha</i> sp.
Theraphosidae	<i>Harpactira hamiltoni</i>
Theridiidae	<i>Steatoda</i> sp. <i>Dipoena</i> sp.? <i>Latrodectus geometricus</i>
Thomisidae	<i>Oxytate</i> sp. <i>Runcinia</i> sp. <i>Synema</i> sp. <i>Thomisus blandus</i>

Follow-up on araneophagous spiders

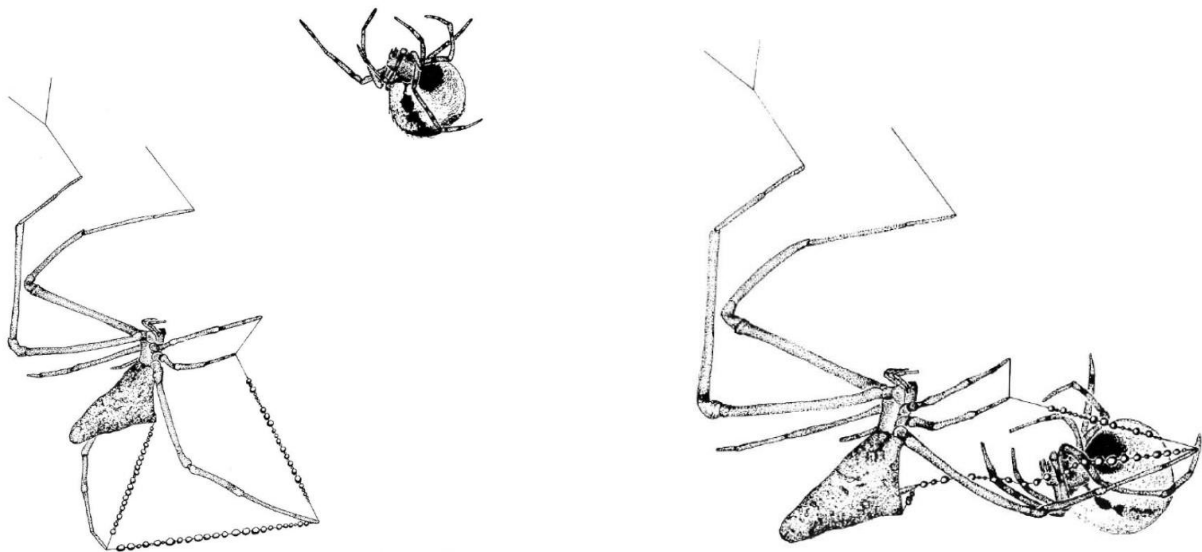
by Rudi Steenkamp

In the previous newsletter (Volume 36, No. 4), I included a short piece about araneophagous spiders that we found on Ruan Booysen's field trip in KwaZulu-Natal, titled "It's a spider-eat-spider world". These spiders included *Portia schultzi* (Salticidae), *Anansi natalensis* sp. (Mimetidae), *Chorizopes* sp. or *Chorizopesoides* sp. (Araneidae), and *Afrarchaea cornuta* (Archaeidae).

Unfortunately, I left out a few other specialist spider hunters that we found on the trip, namely *Rhomphaea* sp. (Theridiidae) and *Palpimanus* sp. (Palpimanidae). A third one, the dew-drop spider (*Argyrodes* sp.), is closely related to *Rhomphaea* spp., and is considered kleptoparasitic (stealing prey from other spiders' webs), but they have also been observed to feed on other spiders.

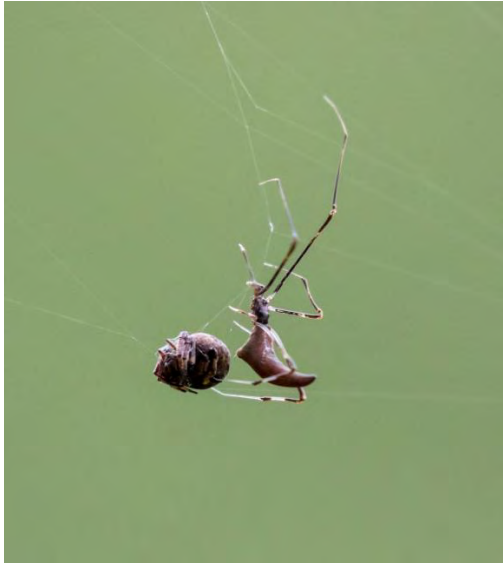
Rhomphaea spp.

Very little is known about our *Rhomphaea* spp. (two recorded species, namely *R. affinis* and *R. nasica*), but one can probably assume that they exhibit similar behaviour to the New Zealand species in the study by Whitehouse (1987)⁴. In this study, the spiders were observed spinning a sticky little "triangle net" at night, and then "scooping" their prey with this net (see Figures 1 & 2). All the prey spiders were web dwellers. Of the 38 *Rhomphaea* spiders observed, 31 were in their own web (a single horizontal thread with a few vertical secondary threads); two were in their own web, interacting with prey spiders; and five were found in the webs of other spiders.



Figures 1 & 2: *Rhomphaea* sp. holding its sticky net with both legs 4 and one leg 2, and then "scooping" its prey with it.
Source: Whitehouse (1987)

⁴ Whitehouse, M.E.A. 1987. "Spider eat spider": The predatory behaviour of *Rhomphaea* sp. from New Zealand. *Journal of Arachnology*, 15: 355-362.



Geoff Lockwood photographed this *Rhomphaea* sp. wrapping what appears to be a tailed orb weaver (*Eriovixia* sp.) in Verlorenkloof, Lydenburg



A *Rhomphaea* sp. that Ruan Booysen and I found in the Royal Natal National Park in KwaZulu-Natal

Palpimanidae

Palp-footed spiders (Palpimanidae) are free-living ground dwellers. While they will sometimes prey on insects, they mostly hunt other spiders. According to Pekár, Šobotník and Lubin (2011)⁵, they are retreat-invading spiders, searching for spiders who hide in their retreats. They will approach their prey slowly and stealthily, and then attack very fast. Their strong front legs hold their prey tight, while the very thick cuticle all over the body prevents injury from defensive bites.

Pekár *et al.* also observed that *Palpimanus* spp. often attacked prey more than 200% their size, which includes many types of web-, plant-, and ground-dwelling spiders.

According to Líznavá, Sentenská, Štáhlavský and Pekár (2018)⁶, *Palpimanus* spp. avoid being eaten by other members of the same species by means of stridulatory organs located on their front legs, which send out an acoustic signal, telling the other spider that it's the same species.



A *Palpimanus* sp. that Ruan Booysen and I found in the Vernon Crookes Nature Reserve, KwaZulu-Natal

⁵ Pekár, S., Šobotník, J. & Lubin, Y. 2011. Armoured spiderman: Morphological and behavioural adaptations of a specialised araneophagous predator (Araneae: Palpimanidae). *The Science of Nature*, 98: 593-603.

⁶ Líznavá, E., Sentenská, L., Štáhlavský, F. & Pekár, S. 2018. Stridulation can suppress cannibalism in a specialised araneophagous predator. *Behavioral Ecology and Sociobiology*, 72: 127.

Argyroides spp.

While the dew-drop spiders (*Argyroides* spp.) are mostly kleptoparasitic, stealing prey from their host's web, some species, like the New Zealand *A. antipodiana* observed by Whitehouse (1986), display araneophagous behaviour. According to Whitehouse (1986) "*A. antipodiana* preys on the host when it is vulnerable during moulting and also captures the host's spiderlings by using aggressive mimicry".

It is not clear whether any of our South African species (*A. convivans*, *A. stridulator*, and *A. zonatus*) display similar behaviour.



An *Argyroides* sp. (probably *A. convivans*) found in northern KwaZulu-Natal

Arachnids of the Succulent Karoo

Fieldwork by Prof. Haddad and Ruan Booysen

by Ruan Booysen



The harsh and unforgiving landscape of Sendelingsdrift, close to the border between South Africa and Namibia. Photo: Ruan Booysen

The Succulent Karoo biome is one of Southern Africa's unique biodiversity hotspots and a centre of endemism. It hosts a vast number of plant species (roughly 5 000 higher plant species) and approximately one-third of all the world's succulent plants. In addition, it is home to an impressive variety of reptiles and invertebrates, of which monkey beetles (Coleoptera: Scarabaeidae: Rutelinae: Hoplinii) are very high in abundance (WWF, 2021). This biome covers approximately 110 000 km², with only 5.8% (6 500 km²) being formally protected (Mucina & Rutherford, 2006). In terms of spider fauna, this biome has been somewhat neglected, since only 44 families, represented by 177 genera and 219 species, have been recorded in this biome up to 2011 (Foord *et al.*, 2011; also see Dippenaar-Schoeman *et al.*, 2005).

Knowing this, Prof. Charles Haddad, Adriaan Stander, Reginald Christiaan, and I embarked on a journey to this unique biome to assess the biodiversity of arachnids present there. Our methods included timed searches in the vegetation's leaf litter and underneath rocks, as well as the beating of trees, bushes, and succulent plants. Our aim: catch everything with eight legs (except mites... we don't do those).

Our first day was the longest, as we had to drive for roughly 12 hours from Bloemfontein to the Ais-Ais/Richtersveld Transfrontier Park. We barely made it in time before the COVID curfew set in. Upon arrival at each of the sites we planned to visit, we scouted the first day for sampling sites, which were the eastern and western slopes of a mountain, a riverbed, and an open plain. The next day sampling started, and we sampled two habitats per day. I expected it to be hot, but after sampling at the first riverbed, I was already completely exhausted. Sampling in this type of habitat was quite challenging, both mentally

and physically. Not only does the heat get to you, but not finding much (compared to sampling in KwaZulu-Natal) takes a toll too!

We quickly learned what types of microhabitats these critters preferred in this arid environment and had a better time finding them after that. Some of the most abundant species were by far *Asemesthes* spp. ground spiders (Gnaphosidae) (aptly named “Corollas” after an inside joke about someone driving with a Toyota Corolla up the muddy river), *Langona* spp. jumping spiders (Salticidae), and *Uroctea quinquenotata* (Oecobiidae). We managed to find some of the other *Uroctea* species as well, such as *U. schinzi* and *U. septemnotata*. The Richtersveld is also the place you may find day-walker scorpions (*Parabuthus villosus*, Buthidae [see Figure 1]), and so we did. I spotted a large female wandering about on my way down from the mountain slope, and I immediately shouted to Reginald to bring me a large container... that man was very excited and within a minute he and Adriaan were beside me ready to assist. After some struggling, we managed to capture the scorpion. At night we set off to look for some scorpions and spiders and we managed to find three species of *Parabuthus* in the area. These were *P. raudus*, *P. capensis*, and *P. brevimanus*, as well as some *Uroplectes* just chilling on the tips of the shrubs. We also found some desert huntsman spiders (*Arandisa deserticola*, Sparassidae) visiting us at our accommodation.



Figure 1: A *Parabuthus villosus* scorpion found in the Richtersveld National Park. Photo: Rudi Steenkamp

Our second sampling site was at Nigramoep Slowliving Guest Farm, a very cozy farm about 37 km south-south-west of Steinkopf. After a bit of... logistical problems... we managed to find the farm and settle in. The farm was situated in the mountains, with beautiful scenery to wake up to every morning. After locating our sampling sites, we typically spent time looking around... you know, just for fun... to see what arachnids we could find in the area. Our time there yielded some more interesting finds, most notably a beautiful baboon spider, *Harpactira* sp. (Theraphosidae) (see Figure 2). Other interesting finds included hundreds of stone-nest spiders, *Nemoscolus* sp. (Araneidae; potentially *N. tubicola*), and *Archaeearanea*

globispira (Theridiidae). And of course, when we had a chance, we went swimming in the pool to escape the heat!



Figure 2: A female baboon spider, *Harpactira* sp. (Theraphosidae). Photo: Ruan Booysen

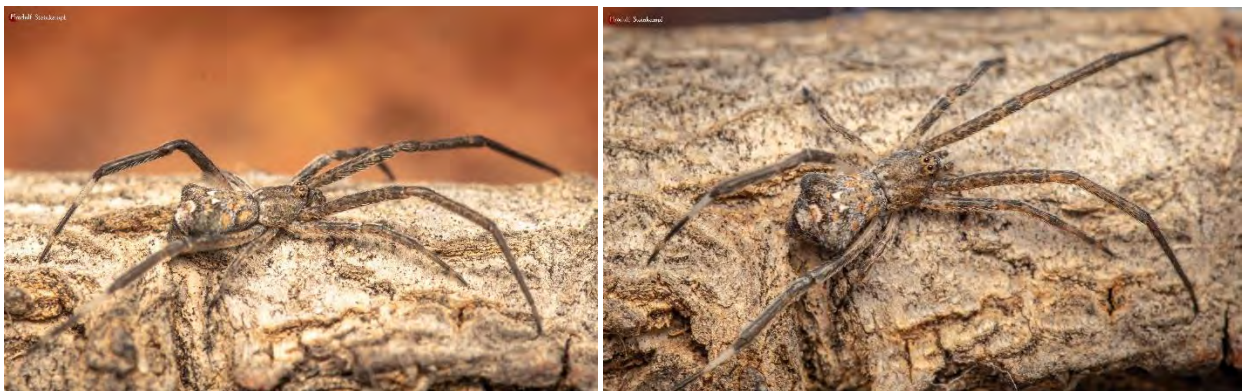
The next stop was Namaqua National Park, a place I have yet to experience during its flowering season. By this point we had become accustomed to the lack of trees at the sampling sites and dry bushes tearing into one's legs when walking. At least in Namaqua, and Nigramoep, there were some trees under which we could rest and sort beating samples. It is amazing how much insect diversity there is around such a tree, especially the *Vachellia* trees. Due to the lack of trees, it can be very difficult to find proper leaf litter to dig around in as most of the shrubs were dry, thorny, or just too small. Luckily, we found a few hidden gems of plants, such as taaibos (*Searsia* sp.) that had surprisingly many arachnids in their leaf litter. Looking out for plants like these made the 2-3 hour-long searches go much faster. The taaibos yielded species such as two-spotted palp-footed spiders (*Diaphorocellus* spp., Palpimanidae), ground crab spiders (*Xysticus* spp., Thomisidae), goblin spiders (*Opopaea* spp. and *Orchestina* spp., Oonopidae) and burrowing zodariids (a *Caesetius* sp. and a beautiful *Psammorygma* sp., Zodariidae). Other shrubs (of which the names I cannot remember) yielded different compositions of spiders, such as ant-mimicking ground spiders (*Micaria* spp., Gnaphosidae), unknown species of dark sac spiders (*Afrocto* spp., Trachelidae), ant-mimicking zodariids (a *Ranops* sp. and a few *Mallinus nitidiventris*, Zodariidae), and various species of pseudoscorpions like the rare genus *Feaella* (Feallidae) (from Calvinia) and *Thaumastogarypus* (Garypidae) (from Tankwa Nature Reserve).

Akkerendam Nature Reserve near Calvinia was next on our list of sampling sites. By this time, we were one man short as we had to say goodbye to Reginald at Namaqua. What this meant for us was that we needed to search for four hours each per habitat, instead of three... doesn't that sound fun? Just joking,

it may be very tiring, but if there are spiders to be found, it is well worth it. I do not remember much from this site, but what I do remember is feeding donkeys, climbing mountains, and seeing millions of springtails (Bourletiellidae) all moving in one direction on the soil surface. Spider-wise, there were a few interesting finds, such as an unknown species of *Poachelas* (Trachelidae) (see Figure 3) from the grass tussocks, some *Scytodes* spitting spiders (Scytodidae), some large ground running spiders (*Hirriusa* spp.; Philodromidae), and a weird comb-footed spider, most likely from the genus *Moneta* (Theridiidae) (see Figures 4 & 5).



Figure 3: An undescribed trachelid sac spider (*Poachelas* sp.; Trachelidae). Photo: Rudi Steenkamp



Figures 4 & 5: Unknown theridiid, possibly *Moneta* sp. Photos: Rudi Steenkamp

The last sampling site for the project was at Tankwa Nature Reserve. The most important thing to know, for anyone who ever decides to visit there, is that it is extremely hot. Temperatures above 35 °C are nothing strange. Knowing this, we tried sampling earlier in the morning and late afternoon, which helped a bit. During our stay there, it was also very dry, and our accommodation was effectively within a desert, 50 km away from reception. We were brave and decided to take on both the mountain slopes on the first day, and in the end we were very exhausted, but very relieved to have finished them first. We were

worried that we would not find anything around our house during nighttime, and this was true for the most part. All the spiders we found near the accommodation were right next to the house, underneath rocks, and in grass patches. This is also where we found most of the individuals of a rare spider family, Filistatidae (see Figures 6 & 7) or otherwise known as crevice weavers. There were also several sand-diving spiders, *Ammoxenus* sp. (Ammoxenidae) (see Figure 8), sheet-web spiders (Linyphiidae), and a black variant of *Mallinus nitiventris* (see Figure 9). During our sampling activities, other spiders such as *Asemesthes* and *Miamuna* spp. (Agelenidae) were very abundant and made up the majority of our specimens.



Figures 6 & 7: A crevice weaver (Filistatidae), and her nest, from Tankwa National Park. Photos: Ruan Booysen



Figure 8: A sand-diving spider, or termite hunter (*Ammoxenus* sp.; Ammoxenidae) from Tankwa Nature Reserve. Photo: Ruan Booysen



Figure 9: A Matjiesfontein malinus (*Malinus nitiventris*; Zodariidae). Photo: Rudi Steenkamp

During the last few days of the trip, we stayed at Wagendrift Lodge, near Laingsburg. The rock formations there were strange and new to me, as I have never seen these “wave-like” sedimentary layers in mountains before – a striking contrast to those of Tankwa Karoo Nature Reserve that were completely straight and horizontal. Our goal here was to find a specific species of *Thyenula* (Salticidae) that apparently mimics “balbyter” ants (*Camponotus fulvopilousus*). We searched for a few hours before eventually finding our first one, underneath a rock, in a ridge of rocks made by the farmers. Shortly thereafter we found some more, several males (see Figures 10 & 11) and potential females (see Figures 12 & 13). These spiders had a beautiful red abdomen with a white/silvery band on the anterior margin. Their legs and carapace were completely black. The suspected females were still sub-adults and were light brown in colour with a few small brown markings on the abdomen. Upon our return to the cottages, we were welcomed by literally hundreds of tarantula hawks (Pompilidae, possibly *Hemipepsis* spp.) that were hanging around our tables. We also searched underneath the rocks in the garden and found plenty of *Scytodes* spitting spiders and *Steatoda* button spiders.



Figures 10 & 11: A *Thyenula* sp. male (Salticidae) from Wagendrift Lodge. Photos: Ruan Booysen



Figures 12 & 13: The suspected *Thyenula* sp. female (Salticidae) from Wagendrift Lodge. Photos: Ruan Booysen

This trip was very hard work. We searched for eight hours each day to cover all the planned activities and sites, but it was well worth it. We found many interesting, rare, and unknown species of arachnids. Even Prof. Haddad said that “it was the best trip I have had in a long time”, which is a good sign! We had good company and a motivated team. I think we sometimes underestimated the true diversity that exists in such an arid environment and I look forward to seeing the results of our trip!



A picture of all the collectors on this trip. From left to right: Adriaan Stander, Reginald Christiaan, Prof. Charles Haddad, and Ruan Booysen.

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Interesting observations on the African intertidal sea-shore spiders, *Amaurobioides africana* (Araneae: Anyphaenidae)

by Renata Kruyswijk

ABSTRACT

Some interesting observations on the African sea-shore spiders (*Amaurobioides africana* Hewitt, 1917) were made at Onrus in the Western Cape, South Africa. In this paper, information on the different retreats they build is provided.

INTRODUCTION

The family Anyphaenidae is represented by more than 565 species, with worldwide distribution, but only one species, *A. africana*, is recorded from South Africa. They are free-running intertidal spiders and are found in the higher shore regions in the zone extending from high-water neaps to high-water springs, an area infrequently flooded by salt water of rocky coasts (Lamoral, 1968; 1971).

A. africana is a Southern African endemic spider described by Hewitt (1917) from South Africa, but it has also been recorded from Namibia. In South Africa, the species is known from the rocky coastlines of East London in the Eastern Cape to several localities in the Western Cape and up to Port Nolloth in the Northern Cape (see Figure 1) (Dippenaar-Schoeman *et al.*, 2020).

TAXONOMY

The spiders are medium to large (body size total length: 10-17 mm, with males slightly smaller). The colour of the body is various shades of brown. The carapace is reddish brown, darker around the eyes, and the abdomen bears distinct chevron patterns dorsally (see Figure 2) and is pale ventrally (see Figure 3). (Lamoral, 1968, 1971; Dippenaar-Schoeman *et al.*, 2020).



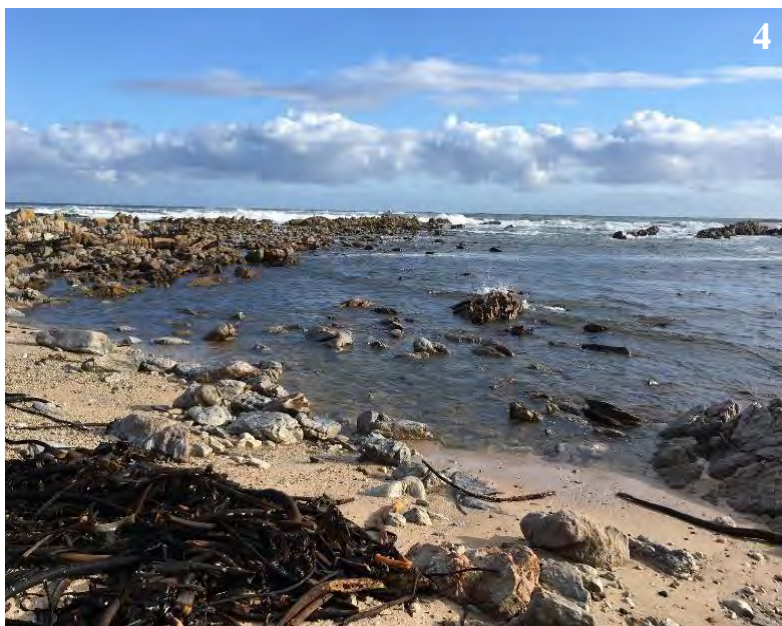
Figures 1-3: *A. africana* 1. Known distribution 2. Female dorsal view 3. Ventral view.

STUDY AREA

APPOINTMENTS WITH NATURE

At Onrus in the Western Cape, I observed several specimens on the rocky shore (see Figures 4-5). For many years, I have collected beached seashells as a holiday activity and discovered treasures along South Africa's magnificent seashore. My adventurous and inquisitive nature rewards me with unmeasurable delights, knowledge, and experiences. When COVID-19 lockdown level 5 started, it became a daily ritual to search for treasures in my (Johannesburg) garden, trying to find something that escaped my eyes before. The tiniest seed, shadow of a leaf, insects, and a myriad of spiders revealed the fascinating world of nature on our doorstep. I started compiling an album with pictures that captured these daily treasures.

In September 2020, I arrived at Onrus for a sabbatical. Ambling over rocky shores, I unexpectedly and in amazement saw a spider under a stone that I turned over, not even knowing that spiders reside near sea water. As an amateur, I gladly share my discoveries with you.

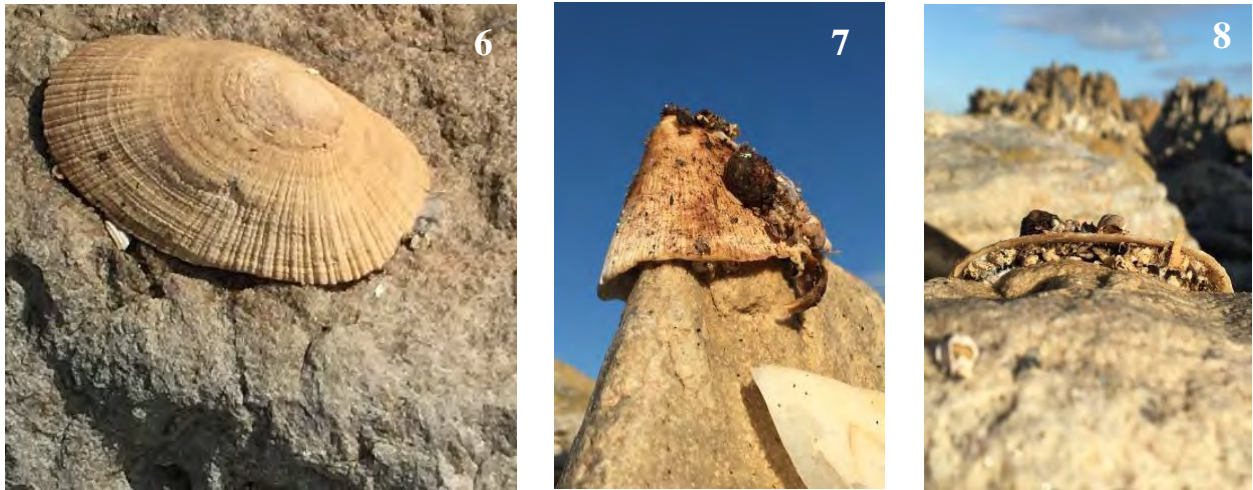


Figures 4-5: Typical areas at Onrus where I found *A. africana*

SEASHORE ARCHITECTS

The *A. africana* spiders were found along the coastline of Onrus and Vermont between rocky shores, underneath stones from about 150 mm diameter and bigger (see Figures 4-5). These spiders surely spend days on end constructing their interesting retreats, where they seem to reside permanently. Commonly found in the same habitat are various isopod species rushing around, small crabs, and huge amounts of washed-up kelp. I observed different types of retreats being made that I call pyramid-like retreats, the Stonehenge-like retreats, and Cairn-like retreats.

1. PYRAMID-LIKE RETREAT



Figures 6-8: *A. africana* retreats: 6. Dorsal view of Limpet shell on rock 7. Side view showing fine pieces of seabed material that are “cemented” with silk threads to hold the intricate construction glued to the stone. 8. The filled space between the edge of the shell and the stone leaves no opportunity for predators to attack.

Limpets’ cap-shaped shells (previously occupied by molluscs) are convenient and preferred shelter for *A. africana*. Their single-handed architectural masterpieces remind me of Egyptian pyramids, although not built by thousands of people!



Figures 9-11: *A. africana* retreats: 9. Silk dividing the interior into at least three separate compartments 10. Several silk sheets are laid down to construct a cosy interior 11. The silk layer on this stone illustrates how the foundation is “glued” to the stone.

The spiders cleverly design their retreats by dividing the interior into at least three separate “compartments” (see Figure 9); one being an open “entrance hall” area where they enter and exit, and possibly drag their prey inside. Anticipating a tidal submersion, a transparent waterproof screen is built in this area. During high tide, they function as submarines. The spiders re-emerge after removing the screen. The second compartment is a semi-cocoon, where they have enough space to manoeuvre comfortably. The third compartment is an area that is built with grit, sand, and micro shells to cover a void, possibly a “nursery”. Dragging the material along must be a tedious task, requiring techniques that would be astonishing to watch. Surely *A. africana* aren’t lazy. Several silk sheets are laid down to construct a cosy interior (see Figure 10). This phenomenon has me wondering if any other spider species builds more layered webs.

The silk layer on this stone illustrates how the foundation is “glued” to the stone (see Figure 11), holding the shell and preventing it from being washed away by strong wave actions. I gently removed the limpet for examination and then replaced the stone and limpet exactly where they were found, feeling a little sad that the spider must rehabilitate its fortress to its former state.

2. STONEHENGE-LIKE RETREAT



Figures 12-13: *A. africana* retreat: A selection of small stones is sufficient for some specimens to build Stonehenge-like structures.

Who would have known that resemblances between this retreat of *A. africana* and the 5 000-year-old Stonehenge prehistoric monument would be linked? Constructing an outer ring with insignificant stones that are kept upright with feather-light silk threads showcases the expertise and creativity of *A. africana*.

I imagine their slogan reads: “Clutter smothers. Simplicity breathes” – Terry Guillemets.

3. CAIRN-LIKE RETREAT



Figures 14-16: *A. africana* cairn-like retreat consists of pebbles attached to stones.

These tiny stone piles resemble ancient cairns serving as memorials or trail markers in many parts of the world, particularly in the Scottish Highlands, dating back about 4 000 years. Each stone is placed strategically, balanced, and glued with silk threads. Most likely *A. africana* have extraordinary navigational skills. This construction was built on a vertically placed stone, unlike others that live under limpets attached to stones on the seabed, where they hide in horizontal or diagonal positions (see Figure 15). Their sticky silk threads prove that gravity can be countered.

Females and juveniles stay in a disturbed retreat; they do not move away. The spiders are very protective of their offspring and won't abandon retreats immediately when disturbed (see Figure 16). It appears that *A. africana* retreats are fixed assets and that some have peaceful relationships with neighbours, or could it be that males and females prefer to live separately?

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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A closer look at spiders

A macro photographer's journey

by Dawie Broekman



Photo therapy

What helped this former arachnophobe overcome his long-standing fear of spiders and go on to become an admin on Southern Africa's two largest spider groups on Facebook (SCSA and SA Spiders)? Photos. Up close and personal, highly detailed, macro photos. You would imagine that being terrifying to someone who fears spiders, but it ended up having the opposite effect on me. It grabbed my attention, made me notice their beauty, made me read the interesting information in the descriptions and comments that went along with it, and it all very quickly led to me changing my whole perception of our eight-legged friends.

While my interest in spiders came fairly recently, my interest in photography and love for nature in general go back a long way. I grew up in a small town called Lydenburg, which is surrounded by some of the most beautiful natural areas in the country, including the Kruger National Park. Many weekends were spent with my family exploring and enjoying these areas. I was in high school when I got my first little point-and-shoot digital camera as a Christmas gift from my parents. That quickly led to me trying to take photos of everything, with a special interest in the "macro" function on the camera. When not out in nature somewhere, I would spend hours looking for insects and other interesting small things to photograph in our yard. One of my photos of a green milkweed locust even ended up being printed in our local newspaper and became a finalist in their photography competition. It never won any prizes... People tend to prefer beautiful landscape, sunset, and wildlife photos, rather than a close-up of what most would consider a garden pest, it seems...

Passion rediscovered

I guess one can say "life happened", and my interest in photography took a bit of a backseat as I pursued other interests in life, mostly career related. As I mentioned earlier, it was after joining the SCSA Facebook group that I was introduced to true macro photography of spiders, and where I rediscovered my interest and love for photography. Having lost my fear of spiders, it also opened up new subjects to photograph. A win-win situation indeed. I was truly inspired by the incredible spider photographs I was seeing by people like Mike Green, Rudi Steenkamp, Andrea Sander, and Vida van der Walt, to name but a few. I would often ask questions to these same photographers, and they were always kind enough to share their knowledge.

Started with what I had

I didn't have any working, dedicated cameras at the time anymore. Thankfully, it was the smartphone age, where we all carried a camera in our pocket. I started taking photos of spiders with that.



This image of a long-winged kite spider (*Gasteracantha* sp.) was taken with my 5-MP smartphone camera, back in 2014. It was also one of my first submissions to the SCSA group, where I requested and received an ID and more information on these beautiful spiders.

About a year ago, someone suggested I try using an added close-up optic on my phone to help me get closer and take macro photos with my phone. I repurposed the main optic of the same point-and-shoot camera I received as a gift back in high school (the camera was defunct by then, but now came in handy in another way instead of just throwing it in the trash).

Here are a few of the images I managed to take with this setup.



Male long-jawed theridiid (*Enoplognatha* sp.).



Female jumping spider (*Icius* sp.).



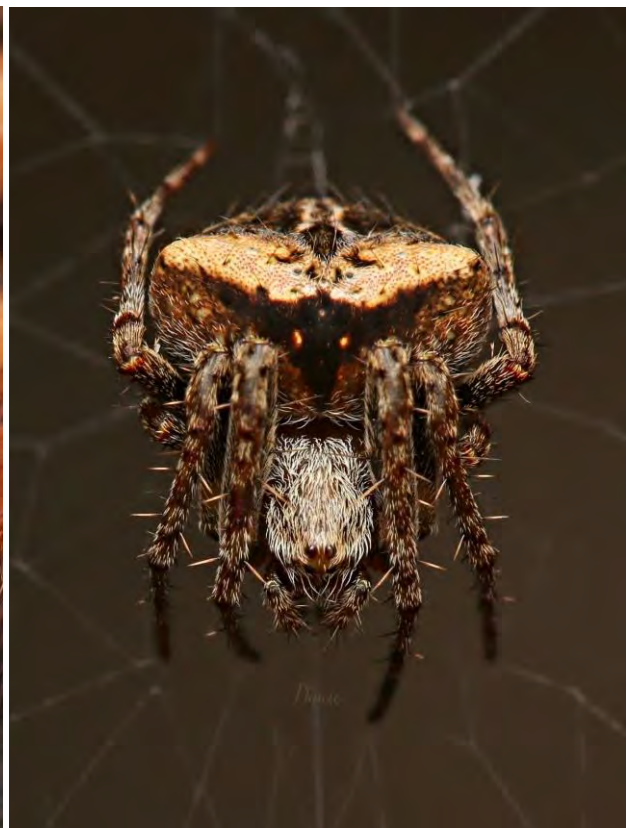
Scorpion spider (*Platyoides walteri*).

It definitely was a massive improvement, especially with smaller spiders, than I could achieve with just the standard smartphone camera. I even managed to take two photos that will be published in a book in the near future.

The working distance of this setup was very challenging though; only allowing me about 2-3 cm between my phone and the subject. This often blocked the natural light, which was all I had to work with on the smartphone. The smartphone flash wasn't of any use at those distances.

And so, it was only a few months later, in May 2020, that I decided to finally invest in a proper DSLR camera: a Canon 800D in bundle form, including two kit zoom lenses. I played around with those for four months, taking photos of the stars, birds in the garden, etc., while saving up for my Canon 60 mm f/2.8 macro USM lens, which I bought in September 2020. The macro lens is on my camera 99% of the time now.

Here are a few of my favourite arachnid shots that I took with this setup...



A solpugid that I had to bribe with food to stand still for a few seconds. This smallish hairy field spider (*Neoscona* sp.) had stunning golden-coloured shoulders.



Left: What I consider one of my personal most beautiful finds... An African mask crab spider (*Synema imitatrix*).
Right: This flower crab spider (*Thomisus* sp.) hides and ambushes prey inside the petals of this miniature agapanthus flower during the day. At night, however, she would come out and offer me a unique photo opportunity.



This male jumping spider (*Heliophanus transvaalicus*) had killed three flies in a row on this glass table one night. I quite like the “drama” this photo expresses.



Left: This beautiful male long-legged sac spider (*Cheiracanthium* sp.) gave me a great photo opportunity while sitting outside of his sac retreat on a leaf. **Right:** Scorpion spider (*Platyoides walteri*). These are some of my favourite spiders, but their flat bodies and shy nature can make them very hard to photograph. I was quite delighted with this shot.

Where to from here?

Having gotten incredible feedback and encouragement from and interactions with professionals in the industry, I recently decided to work towards becoming a full-time, professional nature photographer and photographic safari guide. I hope to soon spend much time in wild places that will offer me new opportunities to find and photograph more species that I have yet to meet. I would love to incorporate macro photography into my career plans, as I believe that getting people to appreciate and understand the role of the small wonders around us is vitally important to ultimately understanding how to effectively protect and conserve the natural world as a whole. I plan to expand my macro-photography capabilities by going into higher magnification and photo-stacking techniques in the future, to be able to give people an even more detailed, closer look at the small, often unnoticed creatures around us.

Tips for beginners in macro photography

- *Learn from others.* I have learned a lot by simply asking advice on gear, settings, techniques, etc. from others, long before I even had any dedicated macro equipment of my own. YouTube videos and other web-based information are also invaluable.
- *Use what you have.* While we all would like to have the best possible gear out there, it is wise to start with what you currently have. Make sure to reach the full potential of your current gear and exceeding its limitations with your skills before upgrading.
- *Patience is key.* I would say that 90% of taking a good photograph of living subjects is pure patience. Spending an extra minute or two with your current subject will often lead to better results than taking a few quick snaps and rushing on to the find the next subject.

Most of all, I hope that others find the same joy as I do in observing these fascinating eight-legged friends of ours. Sometimes the most enjoyable part is putting the camera down, and just watching them do what they do best.

Take care, and happy snapping and spidering!

Dawie Broekman.

Spider of the month

JANUARY

1



2



3



4



5



(1) Community-nest spider (*Stegodyphus* sp.), Hannes Claassens. (2) Black-hand orange jumping spider (*Cyrba nigrimana*), Andrea Sander. (3) Black-and-white box kite spider (*Isoxya cicatricosa*), Rudi Steenkamp. (4) Giant jumping spider (*Hyllus* sp.), Rudi Steenkamp. (5) Zimbabwe brown button spider (*Latrodectus rhodesiensis*), Joanie Beytell.

FEBRUARY



(1) Hedgehog spider (*Pycnacantha* sp.), Marique Kirwan. (2) Wolf spider (Lycosidae), Andrea Sander. (3) Long-jawed water orb weaver (*Tetragnatha* sp.), Bruce Blake. (4) Black button spider (*Latrodectus* sp.), Leigh Bower. (5) Horned bark spider (*Caerostris sexcupidata*), Andrea Sander.

MARCH



NOTE: Second, third, fourth, and fifth places all received the same number of votes.

(1) Female rhene jumping spider (*Rhene konradi*), Rudi Steenkamp. (2) Masked flower crab spider (*Thomisus blandus*), Ruan Booysen. (3) Beetle jumping spider (*Pachyballus* sp.), Bruce Blake. (4) Male rhene jumping spider (*Rhene konradi*), Rudi Steenkamp. (5) Hairy field spider (*Neoscona* sp.), André Leibbrandt.

HONORARY MENTION

These are a few spiders that didn't win Spider of the Month, but that deserve to be showcased.



Comb-footed spider (*Theridula* sp.), Hannes Claassens



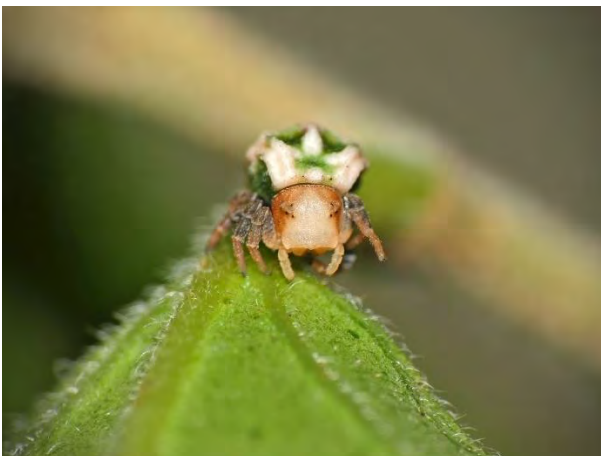
Horned bark spider (*Caerostris sexcupidata*), Daniel Rautenbach



Bomis crab spider (*Parabomis* sp.), Jarrod Michael Todd



Crowned lynx spider (*Hamataliwa* sp.), Hannes Claassens



Bomis crab spider (*Parabomis* sp.), Jonathan Whitaker



Veissella jumping spider (*Veissella durbani*), Bruce Blake

On a lighter note

Like news bulletins on television, we like to conclude the newsletter on a lighter note. Here are a few humorous posts from Facebook:

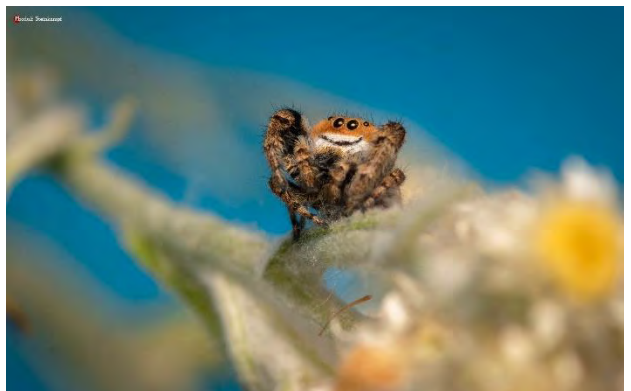
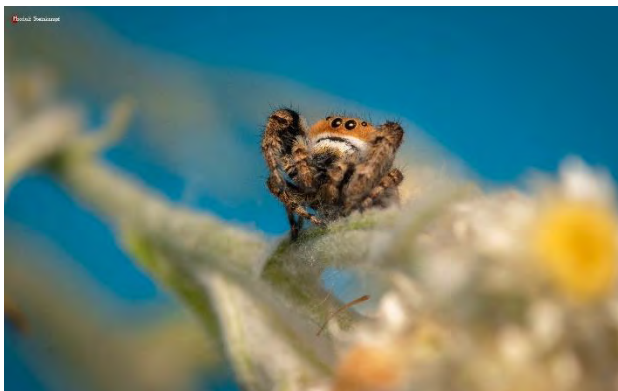
I posted this huntsman (possibly *Palystella* sp.) from the Haddad-Booyesen field trip, and Sebastian Pastor, a friend from Germany, commented the following and made the photo on the right: “I don't know what it is, but I don't trust her. Something about her makes me suspicious.”



Shortly after, I posted a photo of this male *Rhene konradi* jumping spider. Sebastian's comment was as follows: “This one I trust. She looks nice. ❤️”



I found this male *Rhene konradi* looking too unhappy, so I turned his frown upside down.





Eugene van Deventer is with Genevieve Anne Van Deventer.

...

📅 · 19 February · 🌐

Sooooo...

Since we have been on this group we have learnt a lot and try and educate our girls on Spiders to the best of our abilities.

We had a meeting with the teacher of my littlest Daughter, Laura (8years old)

Apparently the Teacher killed a spider yesterday or something, and little Laura broke into tears.

after a hell of a performance, the teacher had to pick the squashed spider up and burry him in the garden outside the classroom.

All the kids attended the funeral as the teacher spoke few words about what a good spider it was etc.

Teaching then resumed as normal 🤪🤪🤪

So PROUD

👍❤️😂 117

18 comments 2 shares

Events

DIARY 2021: Go to www.spiderclub.co.za for more information.

We charge for attendance at field and certain other events: **R50 per adult and R10 per child 11 years and under with the option of paying R150 PER FAMILY for annual subscription.** Some venues also require an entrance fee, which must be paid by each individual. For field trips we will supply vials, magnifiers, plastic pill bottles, and some other basic collecting equipment but please bring your own if you have, as well as any reference books, a picnic lunch, adequate water, a hat, and good walking shoes. **Book on info@spiderclub.co.za or W Caren on 083 753 2946 or contact us on our Facebook page.**



Join our community on Facebook to meet like-minded people and stay updated on upcoming events <https://www.facebook.com/groups/101951926508391/>



Sunday 18 April 2021

Spider Walk: Groenkloof Nature Reserve, Pretoria

Arrive 8.30 am for 9 am. Groenkloof Nature Reserve is, surprisingly, the oldest nature reserve in South Africa! The entrance is off Christina de Wit Avenue, Groenkloof. There is an entrance fee of R45, while pensioners and those under 18 years of age will have to pay R29. The entry gate to Groenkloof is situated on Christina de Wit Avenue. For details or to book, email info@spiderclub.co.za or SMS Henning Boshoff on 071 556 7055.



Saturday 24 to 27 April

Spider Walk: Cumberland Private Nature Reserve, Pietermaritzburg

Directions are on the Cumberland Private Nature Reserve website: www.cumberlandreserve.co.za. A deposit has been paid for eight people in fairly rustic self-catering accommodation. Bedding will be supplied but bring your own towels. For those staying overnight, please pay Astri **NOT THE SPIDER CLUB** R270 per person per night: Account name: Mrs A. Leroy, Nedbank, Westgate, Account No. 1983104213, and email proof of payment to astri@spiderclub.co.za with number of guests and nights you intend to stay and your name. **For overnights, booking will be confirmed when payment is made – no payment, no booking.** There is also a once-off conservation fee of R45 per person to be paid on arrival. Day visitors are not normally allowed, so we have arranged for a **SPIDER WALK on Monday 26 April**, for KZN members. John Roff is a nature guide for Cumberland Nature Reserve and has seen *Pasilobus* (bird dropping araneid) and *Cladomelea* (bolas spider) there. I hope you can join us!



Sunday 16 May

Spider Walk: To be announced

Arrive 8.30 am for 9 am. We will start a little later because it is almost winter. Venue not yet decided. We will let you know in good time.



Saturday 19 June

Presentation and crash course

From 9 am to 12 noon. We have tentatively arranged to visit the Arachnology Section of the Plant Protection Research Institute at Roodeplaat campus to be shown around the national collection of Arachnida and be given a presentation of the work that the scientists are doing, with a crash course in microscope identification methods.

Watch this space!

Keep your eyes on your e-mail and our Facebook page as other events may be organised, sometimes at quite short notice. We will attempt to give you fair warning. And remember that Norman Larsen is at the Cape Union Mart Adventure Centre, Canal walk in Cape Town for the first three Saturdays and the last Sunday of the month between 11 am and 12 pm to demonstrate and talk about SPIDERS!

TAIL END: *"The aim of science is not to open the door to infinite wisdom, but to set a limit to infinite error."*
Bertolt Brecht, German playwright and poet well known for his *bons mots*.