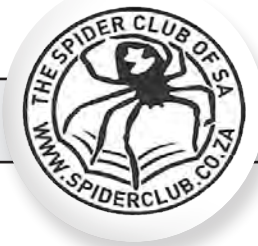


The Spider Club NEWS

September 2021



Vol. 37, No. 3

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



SPRING 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”

Your committee; always available and ready to help:

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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, as well as the entire SCSA Committee (Roulla, Jarrod, Henning, and Desiré) for their contributions.
- Joleen Coetzee for her beautiful front cover drawings.
- Everyone on SCSA 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

Level 2

(The curfew is pushed back a paltry hour but might mean we can stay out later to look for nocturnal spiders and other things that might go bump in the night, like leopards, for example)

The Spider Club has a spring in its step with a great deal of enthusiasm and energy that aren't just due to the season and the thought that summer is almost here; it's you guys, the club members who attend our Spider Walks in droves, those who post their photos on our Facebook page, and members who make suggestions for the future.

There are two young men whose passion for spiders contributes enormously to the Spider Club; they are Ruan Booysen and Jarrod Todd, who should need no introduction as they are "out there" all the time. All this energy is ably supported by the admins who are driving innovative ideas and plans. I'm thinking of our newsletter editor, Rudi Steenkamp, who also runs the online photo and drawing competitions and helps me when I am stumped by the technicalities of the Internet. Then there are the outing organisers, Jarrod Todd (again!) and Henning Boshoff, and of course Roulla Janse van Rensburg, who is now our membership secretary, and Desiré Pelser, who runs our webpage.

Oh, and membership numbers are up again, by just a little to 505. Not bad for a natural history interest group based at the far end of Africa!

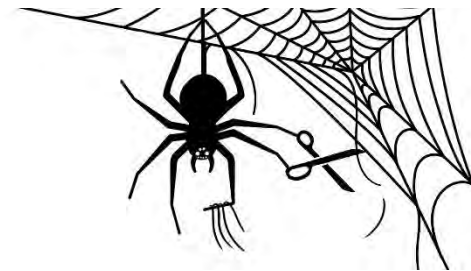
I'm off to the wilds (genuine wilds) of the Eastern Cape for 10 days with NO CELL RECEPTION and a lot of organising to do, so I'll sign off for now and write a bigger "From the Hub" next time. I hope my camera batteries and power packs last for 10 days without mains electricity so that I have some cool photos to show you when we get back.

Happy Spidering!

Astri Leroy

16 September 2021

Snippets

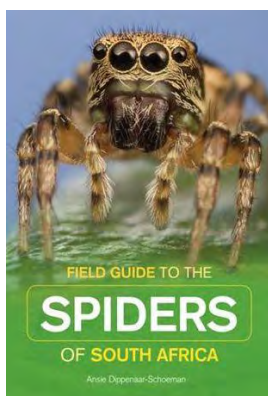


SCSA Committee

Welcome to two new committee members, Roulla Janse van Rensburg (social secretary) and Jarrod Michael Todd (events organiser). Roulla replaces Caren Neal, who resigned as social secretary. Thank you, Caren, for all the work you've done for us, and thank you, Roulla and Jarrod, for agreeing to help us out.

Jarrod recently organised his first spider walk (see page 9), and also wrote a piece about his macrophotography journey (see page 31).

Ansie's new field guide



The cover of Prof. Ansie's previous field guide

Prof. Ansie Dippenaar-Schoeman needs no introduction. She is one of the foremost experts on the Thomisidae, the matriarch of African arachnology, and was the author of probably the most popular field guide in South Africa (*Field Guide to the Spiders of South Africa*).

Many people were rather disappointed to hear that the field guide won't be updated again, and that she's not planning to write a new one, partly because it's easier to update taxonomic changes in a digital format.

Seven years later, Prof. Ansie has finally revealed that Penguin Random House (who merged with Lapa Publishers) asked her to write a new field guide, and she agreed. She recently finished with the guide, but unfortunately it takes about a year

for the book to appear on the shelves, so we can expect the new field guide near the end of 2022.

Now that the field guide is finished, she will continue working on the SANSA photo guides, which are available in PDF format and which include all the approximately 2 300 recorded species in South Africa, unlike the field guide, which will contain about 900 selected species.

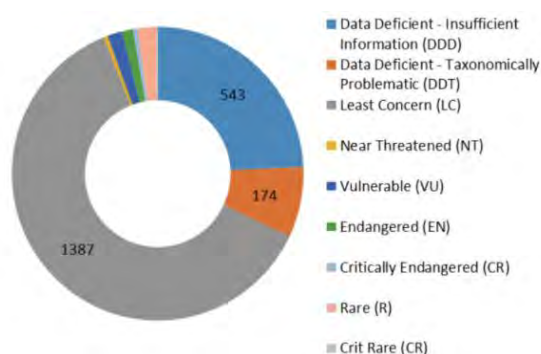
The field guide will be available in hardcopy and in English.

IUCN Red List of South African spiders



The Arachnology Unit of the Agricultural Research Council (ARC), under the

guidance of Prof. Ansie Dippenaar-Schoeman, has been working with the South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI) for the past few years to review the threatened status of at least 2 200 of our South African spider species for inclusion on the International Union for Conservation of Nature's (IUCN) Red List. Their findings conclude that 3% of our spider species are threatened, 32% are data deficient, 3% are near threatened or rare, and 62% are of least concern.



These data are useful because spider biodiversity needs to be included in every environmental impact assessment conducted, which will help protect our threatened and near-threatened species.


Spider exhibition at Canal Walk



For arachnophiles in Cape Town, or simply curious people wanting to see spiders, 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.

Mike Green's book on spiders

FASCINATING CREATURES



Southern African Spiders likely to be found in and around our gardens and homes!
by Mike Green

THIS BOOK WAS SELF PUBLISHED AS IS NOT YET AVAILABLE IN RETAIL STORES.

YOU MUST THEREFORE ORDER BY E-MAIL TO:
mg0718762saltbooks@gmail.com

YOU WILL THEN RECEIVE FURTHER INSTRUCTIONS BY RETURN E-MAIL ON HOW TO ORDER/PAY ETC.

SIZE OF BOOK = A5
PAGES = 201
PHOTOS = 198
TEXT = 19,000+ WORDS

SELLING PRICE
R250 plus any postage/delivery costs

NB: It is important to mention that this is not a scientific based Field Guide.

Mike Green, one of our more active members on SCSA, recently self-published his book about spiders commonly found in your garden and house. While this book is not a field guide, it does mention some interesting information and photos and is written in a way that is easy for beginners to understand. To order this book, see the contact details in the above advertisement.

March of the mygalomorphs

Friedi Arthur recently posted a video of hundreds, if not thousands, of baby spiders marching in line like ants in northern KZN. Dr Ian Engelbrecht posted the following comment:

We need video footage of them ballooning, then a short scientific note can be published.

Such an amazing thing to see, I've never seen it myself. Stasimopus indeed. We think they do this, then go up a tree and balloon! Which would make them one of the few mygs in the world that balloon. But everyone stops recording when they see them on the ground, or when they see them going up a tree 🐸

And only ever seen in northern KZN, probably Stasimopus rufidens. No other records from other parts of the country where other Stasimopus occur.

The video of this extraordinary behaviour can be viewed here:

https://web.facebook.com/groups/101951926508391/permalink/4303452543024954/?_rdc=1&_rdr

6th ASA conference held in India

The Asian Society of Arachnology (ASA) invites students and researchers all over the world, especially those who work on Asian arachnids, to attend the 6th ASA Meeting and Conference, which will be held from 20 to 23 December 2021 in Kochi, India. The conference will be held both digitally and in person. Participants are encouraged to submit abstracts and papers, either orally or written, which will be reviewed by the screening committee. An excursion will also be held in the Athirappally-Vazhachal-Malakkappara region. For more information, and to register for participation/attendance, visit <http://asa2020.southindianspiders.org/default.asp>

Update of website on Mexican spiders

The International Society of Arachnology recently circulated this email on behalf of Fernando Padilla:

"Dear All,

Our website www.unamfcaracnolab.com about Mexican Araneomorph spiders received an important update this week that adjusts the page proportions on any screen size. The main

pages were the worst affected on small screens (Home, People, etc.), and with 46% of our visits coming from cell phones and pads I considered important to make this announcement. We integrated the new code to a few spider inventories pages but the view did not improve significantly, however web design improvements are always possible. Please let us know if you have any comments, ideas, recommendations or found a misidentification to my email address.

Thanks and best wishes.

Dr. Fernando Alvarez Padilla"

Russian entomologist passes away



Viktor Anatolyevich Krivohatsky, a Russian entomologist, passed away on 18 August 2021 at the age of 67. He was a doctor of biological sciences, as well as the leading researcher at the Laboratory of Insect Taxonomy. Among other interests, he mainly specialised in antlions (Myrmeleontidae) and the ecology and evolution of insect communities. He was involved in more than 100 scientific works from 1980 to 2008, and was also involved in nature conservation (he kept the Red Data Books).

Symposium celebrates John Murphy and Mike Roberts



Two of Britain's arachnological giants and honorary members of the British Arachnological

Society (BAS), John Murphy and Mike Roberts, both passed away in the last year. They both worked on not only British spiders, but also spiders from all over the world.

Mike Roberts passed away on 26 October last year (see Snippets in Vol. 37, No. 1) at the age of 75. Apart from his scientific works and his illustrations of spiders (which he was best known for), he was also a GP until 1990, when he gave up medicine to focus on his illustrations, as well as paintings and drawings of portraits and landscapes. He also contributed to *The Moths and Butterflies of Great Britain and Ireland*. He and John Murphy often worked together, providing some text and all of the drawings, and he was involved in 39 publications.

John Murphy studied mathematics, but his studies were interrupted by World War II, where he used his mathematical skills to pinpoint bombing targets. After the war, he lectured mathematics at Brunel University. His wife, Frances, developed an interest in spiders at this time, especially photographing them, and when an injury made John retire from cricket, which he played for 45 years, Frances pulled him into the world of spiders. Together they travelled the world, and amassed a collection of more than 45 000 spiders. Frances passed away in 1995, and John kept on working on spiders with various arachnologists, particularly John Roberts. While the two worked on *Spider Families of the World and Their Spinnerets*, John's health started to decline and he was diagnosed with early-stage dementia. In January, John had a fall, presumably caused by a stroke, and he died in hospital on 28 January, a few days short of his 99th birthday.¹

A symposium to celebrate the life of these two giants, as well as Frances, will be held on 3 December 2021, from 11 am to 16:45 pm. To attend the Zoom meeting, contact Dmitri Logunov at dmitri.v.logunov@manchester.ac.uk.

¹ *Arachnology*, 18(7):803-808. Available at: https://www.britishtspiders.org.uk/sites/default/files/2021-07/John%20Murphy%20obit_0.pdf.

Harvestmen genetically engineered to have short legs

A recent study by Guilherme *et al.*² sought to discover the genes responsible for harvestmen's (Opiliones; called daddy longlegs in their article) long legs. Without going too much into genetics jargon, the team isolated two genes responsible for leg development and blocked the activation of those two genes. This resulted in harvestmen with short legs, which eventually turned into pedipalps. The team then deactivated another gene, which led to the harvestmen's short legs not turning into pedipalps, but which lacked the tarsomeres, or joints, which meant they couldn't bend their legs to grasp prey.

This work will help us understand the development of prehensile (grasping) legs, as well as the reason for the development of long legs in certain species.

New book about spiders in horror films



German author Rainar Nitzsche is releasing a new book about spiders in horror films, titled

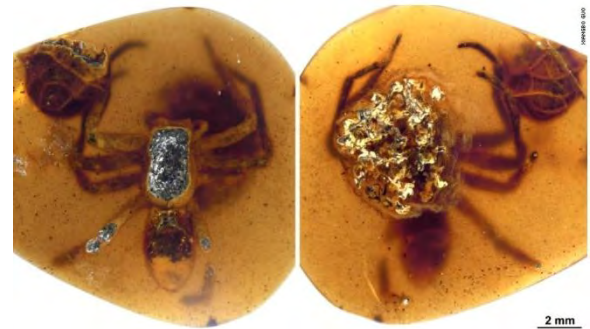
“Spinnenhorrorfilme. Spinnen in Hauptrollen von Tarantula bis Arachnado 2” (Spider horror films. Spiders in main roles, from

Tarantula to Arachnado 2).

From 1955 to date, spiders have featured in many films, particularly horror films. This book

investigates their role, from main roles to supporting roles, and from monster spiders to real spiders. The book will be a good read for fans of both spiders and horror films. Sadly, it's available only in German...

Ancient spider found protecting young



Maternal care is nothing new in extant spiders, but how old is this behaviour? A recent study³ of four pieces of amber fossils determined that even though evidence of maternal care in fossil spiders is rare, these fossils indicate that it dates back at least 99 million years. The amber fossils contain spiders of the extinct family Lagonomegopidae and were found in Myanmar. The fossils contained a mature female, part of an egg sac, and some spiderlings. This indicates that the mother guarded the egg sac in the nest or retreat, and that the babies most likely stayed with their mom for a while before dispersing.

The findings of this study enhance our understanding of the evolution of maternal care in spiders, which also plays a big part in the evolution of social behaviour in spiders.

² Guilherme Gainett *et al.* 2021. The genome of a daddy-long-legs (Opiliones) illuminates the evolution of arachnid appendages, *Proceedings of the Royal Society B: Biological Sciences*, 288(1956):4 Aug. <https://doi.org/10.1098/rspb.2021.1168>

³ Guo, X., Selden, P. & Ren, D. 2021. Maternal care in Mid-Cretaceous lagonomegopid spiders. *Proceedings of the Royal Society B: Biological Sciences*, 288(1959):15 Sept. <https://doi.org/10.1098/rspb.2021.1279>

Recent Events

ROODEPLAAT CAMPUS – 21 AUGUST 2021

by Philip Hulse



Petro Marais (right) informing the attendees of their duties for the day. From left to right: Roger Young, Alison Morgan, Declan Morgan, Nigel Hulse, and Philip Hulse.

Dad and I attended the Spider Club outing to the National Arachnid Collection on the Roodeplaat Campus of the Agricultural Research Council (ARC) on 21 August. It was a fantastic morning of what Astri calls “slave labour” with Petro Marais, the National Arachnid Collection Manager.

We were shown the section of the collection that holds the specimens that still need to be classified – tens of thousands of arachnids waiting to be classified so that they can be entered into the over 80 000 (yes, eighty thousand!) vials currently in the collection. Petro’s job is a mammoth one; every single vial is stored by order and then by family and then numbered by year and number and documented so that each one can be tracked – specimens are loaned to arachnologists all over the world, all the way to Siberia!

We learned that the Red List of South African spiders is being finalised and will be released soon [Editor’s note: see Snippets on page 4]. This Red List is thought to be the first of its kind in the world that includes all known spider species and not just those that are part of the pet trade. Most of the information used in the Red List was obtained from the National Arachnid Collection at Roodeplaat Campus.

After being shown around, Petra asked us to choose a drawer and go through the vials to check the level of the preservative 70% alcohol in the vials. We were given a squirt bottle, shown where the alcohol was, and asked to top up the vials that were too low and remove any air bubbles trapped under the cotton wool plugs.

Dad and I thoroughly enjoyed the visit and the “forced labour” so much that we have asked to go again and do it all again!



Left: Philip Hulse inspecting one of the vials. **Middle:** Philip’s father, Nigel. **Right:** Roger Young, one of SCSA’s previous chairpersons.

I have always been fascinated by spiders, snakes, and other critters, but I never had the opportunity to share my love and fascination, and there was no platform where I could gain more knowledge and understanding.

Then a friend, Garrie Gazza Wright, saw my enthusiasm on Facebook, and introduced me to The Spider Club of Southern Africa. What an amazing group! Awesome people, always willing to assist!

I saw these Spider Walks every month, but didn't think much about it, as I thought it was more for the experts. Little did I know!

Jarrold organised the first walk for the new season, and I was asked if I am going. Absolutely!

Sunday morning we all met at Heksies Hideaway in Magaliesburg. Finally I could meet the people making this group one of the most informative and pleasant groups I've ever joined!

Casual introductions, a quick briefing by Jarrold explaining the the dos and don'ts, and off we went looking for spiders!

We found some really nice spiders, using sweepnets, shaking tree branches, and turning over rocks, logs, etc. All this happened in a really relaxed and casual way, with the experts assisting us newbies with advice and capturing our finds.

Then the real nice part came when we all headed back to go examine and photograph what we've found. During this part, every spider was identified, and certain key features were pointed out to assist with the identification. Questions asked were answered with enthusiasm by the experts. Every single spider was treated with care and was released again after the photo session.

Stunning photos taken by Jarrold were shared on the group for all to view.

This was my first ever social Spider Walk, and honestly, I thoroughly enjoyed the entire outing, and I thoroughly enjoyed every minute! It's really pleasant and great fun for the whole family!

If you haven't done a Spider Walk yet, I would honestly recommend that you join the walks. It's fun, relaxed, and very informative! I personally can't wait for the next one!

Thank you, Jarrold; I really enjoyed the day!

Thys Mulder

As a long-time admirer of all things eight-legged, I have been collecting, observing, and working around spiders for much of my life – but I have not really done much about it. It was only during the early part of the COVID-19 lockdown in 2020 that I connected with the spider-ologists on the club's Facebook page when I started posting pics of spiders near my house in Limpopo. The enthusiasm for spiders and willingness to share information by the experts on that forum are remarkable – so when the opportunity to go out on a Spider Walk near Hekpoort came up, I was keen to meet other spider enthusiasts and to see how they went about the business of a “Spider Walk”.

Arriving around 8 am at Hekpoort Heksie, I was a bit concerned by the lack of natural bush – the area is dominated by some old fields, an extensive area of encroaching poplar trees, a couple of houses, and some rank grass between the fields. The late winter colours indicated very dry conditions and very few of the trees had leaves – I was sure that there would be few species and relatively few individuals out there. How wrong could I be?!

Jarrold, Astri, Garrie, and other “regulars” were clearly fired up and ready to get out there – their passion and purpose got to the rest of the crew – with many newbies like myself excited and ready to go. Vials were handed out, explanations provided, indicators given as to where to find spiders, possible species around were discussed, and off we went. The group was a large one and pretty soon everyone was off into the poplar stand near the river, into the old fields, bashing around in the tall grass and fossicking in the areas around the houses. But it was the younger kids who really impressed me with their interest and sharp eyes. Turning over rocks and logs, digging around under bark, looking in leaf litter, and sweeping with nets in the emergent vegetation on the edge of the river, their energetic enthusiasm started to produce results. The number of species was a surprise to me given the tough late winter conditions and it was amazing to see how many individuals there were in some areas. Some of the highlights for me were the hammock-web spiders (Linyphiidae) in the poplars, a beautiful male black button spider (*Latrodectus geometricus*), and the green grass crab spiders (*Oxytate* sp.) found by two of the youngest members of the group.

Jarrold and his professional co-leaders were fantastic in their willingness to stop what they were doing, look at what someone else had found, provide an explanation and a name, and generally get everyone excited and interested in what was going on.

Many thanks to you all for a great morning!

Christopher Hines

Here are some of the photos that Jarrold took of some of the spiders found:



Three comb-footed spiders (Theridiidae). **Left:** *Theridion* sp. **Middle:** *Tidarren* sp. **Right:** cf. *Achaearanea* sp.



Green grass crab spider (*Oxytate* sp.)



Two velvet spiders (Eresidae). *Gandanameno* and/or *Dresserus* sp.



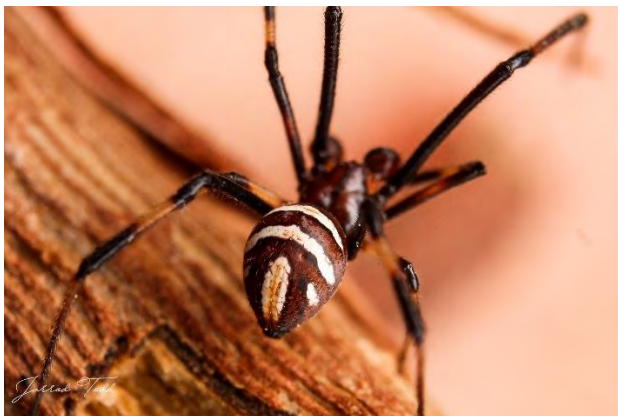
Left: African cucumber spider (*Prasonica* sp.). **Right:** Masked crab spider (*Synema* sp.)



Left: Daddy longlegs (*Quamtana* sp.). **Right:** Hammock-web spider (Linyphiidae)



Tailed orb-web spider (*Eriovixia excelsa*)



Left: Black button spider (*Latrodectus renivulvatus*). **Right:** Crowned nursery-web spider (*Rothus* sp.)

Below is the species list for the Heksies Hideaway Spider Walk:

| FAMILY | GENUS/SPECIES |
|-------------------------|---|
| Agelenidae | <i>cf. Benoitia</i> sp. |
| Araneidae | <i>Neoscona</i> sp. <i>Prasonica seriata</i> <i>Eriovixia excelsa</i> |
| Bemmeridae: | <i>cf. Spiroctenus</i> sp. |
| Cheiracanthiidae | <i>Cheiracanthium</i> sp. |
| Clubionidae | <i>Clubiona</i> sp. |
| Dictynidae | <i>cf. Archaeodictyna</i> sp. |
| Eresidae | <i>Dresserus</i> sp. Possibly <i>Gandanameno</i> sp., but unsure. |
| Gnaphosidae | <i>cf. Xerophaeus</i> sp. |
| Lycosidae | <i>Hogna</i> sp. <i>Allocosa</i> sp. |
| Linyphiidae | <i>Mecynidis dentipalpis</i> |
| Oxyopidae | <i>Oxyopes</i> sp. |
| Pholcidae | <i>Quamtana</i> sp. <i>Smeringopus</i> sp. |
| Phyxelididae | Various genera and species. |
| Pisauridae | <i>Euprosthopsis</i> sp. <i>Rothus</i> sp. |
| Salticidae | <i>Evarcha flagellaris</i> <i>Heliophanus pisticae</i> <i>Rumburak laxus</i> <i>Thyene ogdeni</i> |
| Tetragnathidae | <i>Tetragnatha subsquamata</i> |
| Theridiidae | <i>cf. Cryptachaea</i> sp. or <i>Achaearanea</i> sp. <i>Enoplognatha inornata</i> <i>Latrodectus renivulvatus</i> <i>Steatoda</i> sp. <i>Theridion</i> sp. <i>Tidarren</i> sp. |
| Thomisidae | <i>Oxytate argenteooculata</i> <i>Synema simoneae</i> <i>Xysticus</i> sp. |
| Uloboridae | <i>Uloborus</i> sp. |

A Tribute to Joan Faiola

Remembering Joan Faiola and Her Enormous Contribution to The Spider Club of Southern Africa

by Astri Leroy and Alice Aubrey



From left to right: Joan Faiola, John Leroy, Astri Leroy, Alistair Mathie (Chairman), Ian Engelbrecht, Miemie Byrch, Danie Smit and Rossouw Lambrechts (Miemie's son)

On Saturday 28 August, a small group of friends – Alice, Garth, and Wynne Aubrey, Miemie Byrch, Jeremy Munton-Jackson, and John and Astri Leroy – visited Nylsvley Nature Reserve to view a commemorative paver in the Remembrance Garden at the reserve. It was a bitterly cold day, even at Nylsvley, which is usually warm to hot. It was lovely to be greeted by a tiny speck of a lynx spider that greeted us with raised front legs for a few seconds, then leapt away. That was the ONLY spider we saw all day but we did see lots of birds, Joan's first love before she got involved with spiders. To the right is a photo of the paver taken by Jeremy Munton-Jackson. The wording is fairly plain, a collaborative effort which I hope conveys her complete devotion to and love of the natural world, the sphere in which we knew Joan best.



While we were there, we all thought back on how much she meant to us individually and collectively, and the immense contribution she made to The Spider Club of Southern Africa. She edited The Spider Club News from spring 2008 to autumn 2019 and was elected a Spider Club committee member at the AGM on 28 June 2008. Joan was born in England, and attended grammar school, where she shone academically. She, and her then husband, emigrated to South Africa in the 1970s, initially living in Pretoria (Tshwane). Joan had a career in finance, at which she excelled with her meticulousness and incredible work ethic.

Joan was articulate, highly intelligent, and at heart a scientist (in fact, a “lab rat” – the affectionate term for those who like peering down microscopes). With a formidable memory for the scientific names of organisms, the etymology of those names, and the organisms’ natural history, she was able to contribute meaningfully to the study of natural history, spiders in particular. She often told me that birds and ornithology had been her first love, but she became fascinated by the smaller creatures, including spiders. She knew birds and bird calls inside out. It was quite scary to walk with her, hear a bird call, and be given both the common and scientific name without ever seeing the bird in question! We had many discussions about indigenous plants, birds, and arachnids; her little gem of a garden at her home reflected her joy and delight with the biodiverse natural world. Joan never did anything in half measures and applied herself fully to any subject she found interesting; teaching herself both by observation and research and always happy to pass on her knowledge.



Spider Club members visiting the ARC and learning the basics of spider identification. Back row: Ansie Dippenaar, Robin Lyle, Joan Faiola, and Lance Robinson. Front row: Unidentified, Petro Marais, and Carol Smith.

As editor of The Spider Club News, she kept up with scientific research and would find interesting articles, scientific and otherwise, often with pithy comments about them. She ran a series of articles about



Joan and Astri showing respect for the 2008 Chairman, Alistair Mathie

common spiders found in and around our homes and gardens and nagged the rest of us to submit sightings, discoveries, and observations. She was meticulous in referencing her sources, even getting permission to use Gary Larson's "The Far Side" cartoons from his publishers and heirs!

In 2012, Joan, helped by Paul Cowan (Spider Club), Morné Brits (Klipriviersberg), Alice Aubrey (Spider Club), J-P Schutte (Spider Club), and occasionally me, began what was supposed to be a two-year survey of the arachnids occurring in the Klipriviersberg Nature Reserve south of Johannesburg. When the two years were up, the survey was extended indefinitely, and Joan was still working on it at the time of her death. Some classic collecting methods were used: pitfall trapping, tree trunk trapping, sweep-netting, and hand collecting, all done to a specific formula set out by Charles Haddad. (From time to time, Spider Club members visited the reserve to help with the collecting but this

common spiders found in and around our homes and gardens and nagged the rest of us to submit sightings, discoveries, and observations. She was meticulous in referencing her sources, even getting permission to use Gary Larson's "The Far Side" cartoons from his publishers and heirs!

The Klipriviersberg Survey

didn't always work according to plan, because spider people will insist on doing their own thing! Joan complained that it was like trying to herd cats to get the members to follow instructions. She did have a great love of cats, though!)



John and Paul Leroy ran a photo workshop in the Leroy's' garden. Here Joan is really getting down to it...

Of course, having collected many hundreds of specimens, they had to be identified and this is where Joan really shone. She taught herself how to identify spiders using the generic keys in the 1997 book, *African Spiders Identification Manual* by Ansie Dippenaar-Schoeman and Rudy Jocqué. Along with several other Spider Club members, she had attended basic identification courses at the ARC, run initially by Prof. Dippenaar-Schoeman and later by Robin Lyle, using the 2015 *Manual to Identify Common Spider Families of South Africa*, by Prof. Ansie and Robin. This enabled us to pass on our knowledge and run identification courses ourselves. To make any meaningful contribution, specimens must first be sorted into genera and then, if possible, into species. Working with specimens preserved in alcohol is not for the fainthearted. Like most of us from the PD (Pre-Digitisation) era, she found many of the ground-living spider families and genera quite difficult to differentiate, and so came up with her own ingenious “analysis by eye and claw numbers” method, using this and body shapes. I still find this system extremely useful when doing an initial specimen sorting, although there have been many taxonomic changes since then.



Left: Joan and Ansie Dippenaar working on spider identification. **Right:** Discussing the finer points of the genitalia of some poor dead spiders; from left to right: Joan, Astri, Karin Spottiswood, and Peet van der Ark.

Joan was knowledgeable and forthright when it came to debate; one particular instance was of the venom toxicity of sac spiders (*Cheriacanthium furculatum*). As most spider people know, these creatures have an unfortunate and rather undeserved reputation among the public. Joan went into the discussion, armed with her ability to gain a thorough understanding of the subject at hand. She delved into scientific literature and collected anecdotes of supposed and verified spiders bites. The arachnological world in South Africa was, and still is, divided right down the middle on this subject. Joan found herself pitted on one side of the argument; however, she remained steadfast in the opinion she had formed. While the two “camps” are now mostly resolved to agree to disagree, it did cause quite considerable tension in our small spider-loving world! Joan’s wit, humour, and sometimes blunt appraisal of things are very much missed. She was excellent company and one of those special people with whom you could share your exciting finds of strange and wonderful beasts, no matter how tiny.



Joan hated having her picture taken but I just HAD to share this photo, taken at Borakalalo on a birding, butterfly, frogging, and spidering weekend.

Astri Leroy and Alice Aubrey.

Poortview 15/09/2021

|Ai-|Ais, Here We Go Again!

Spiders of the Richtersveld

Text and all photos by Ruan Booysen



In January 2021, my colleagues and I experienced how hot the Richtersveld can get. The name |Ai-|Ais means “burning water”, a reference to the hot springs in the park, but maybe it could also refer to the hot environment! During July, we decided to see how cold it gets, and I must say it is much more manageable. Now why on earth would we go here? Well, besides the pretty flowers, cool succulents, and beautiful sunsets, we actually went to collect spiders. Before our initial trip to the Richtersveld, and a few other places in the Succulent Karoo biome, I was on the fence (or maybe on a cactus?) about what we would find. On the one hand, the place is incredibly dry (at least in the areas we were), receiving less than 220 mm rain annually, and we questioned whether we made the right choice spending all that money to get there. On the other hand, anything that we would find would be, in my opinion, considered new and amazing.

While collecting has been done in the Succulent Karoo, surprisingly little is known about the arachnid fauna there. The goal of our trip was to collect as many arachnids as possible, getting those records for the Succulent Karoo and the Northern Cape, and barcoding (analysing a specific gene in their DNA for species identification) them for genetic work later on. Our trip during the winter only focused on the Richtersveld to collect some winter data, as well as some pretty little sun jumping spiders (*Heliophanus* spp., Salticidae) for another project regarding their mating behaviour. This time we stayed at the reserve’s

research accommodation a little bit outside Sendelingsdrif, allowing us to do some very lucrative night searches around the nearby rocky outcrops.

So how did it go? The trip was very successful in finding a bunch of arachnids during our collecting sessions, and we also found a bunch of salticids. Some of the very first spiders we found were *Menemerus* jumping spiders, and not only one, but two species on the house's wall. The more common one, a light brown species (see Figure 1), is apparently new to science, and the other one is *M. rubicundus* (see Figure 2). These were very common around the house and under the smooth stones that support the surrounding fence. Among them was another species of jumping spider, *Euophrys leipoldti*, a genus not seen too often by the general public. They were also found underneath the rocks near the house and on one of the mountain slopes, usually males and females close together (see Figure 3).

During our stay at Sendelingsdrif, our sampling routines were a little bit more relaxed than during the summer trip, and since we had five days, we could do one habitat per day (instead of two) and do some collecting for fun afterwards. During our official sampling sessions, called transects, we had to follow strict protocol to ensure that the data are comparable. The protocol comprised four hours of hand collecting (per person), of which two were allocated for searching underneath rocks, and two for searching in the leaf litter of vegetation. After that we had to do some foliage beating (literally beating a bush/tree with a stick to see what falls out), 200 times (1 beat = 3 hits).

When sampling like this, we have to catch everything, meaning all arachnids are fair game, and many times we find very cool stuff even though they may not always be adults. Some of these include things like the rarely seen goblin spider, *Australoonops granulatus* (Oonopidae) (see Figure 4), *Prodidomus* sp. ground spiders (Gnaphosidae) (see Figure 5), a beautiful palp-footed spider (*Palpimanus* sp., Palpimanidae) (see Figure 6), a very pretty *Psammorygma* sp. (Zodariidae) (see Figure 7), a new species of *Systenoplacis* (Zodariidae) (see Figure 8), and Namaqua hackled mesh-web spiders (*Namaquarachne angulata*, Phyxelididae) in the leaf litter. Interestingly, the latter species was the only phyxelidid species we found in our time there. They were only found in a grassy shrub in the open plain habitats, and their nests tucked into the dry grassy litter (see Figure 9). Another highlight of the trip was the addition of six new species of the genus *Miamuna* (Agelenidae) (see Figure 10) to South Africa. There were plenty of these spiders in the leaf litter and under rocks, hiding in their cozy funnel webs.

During the evenings, we embarked on night searches, usually on and around a nearby outcrop of rocks. Lifting rocks is probably 90% of what we do during fieldwork, and it can be quite fun. It was here where we found our first violin spider, *Loxosceles pilosa* (see Figure 11), as well as some very defensive huntsman spiders, *Palystella* sp. (Sparassidae) (see Figure 12). While walking around, we noticed some strange long-legged spiders, very quickly darting around on the ground and then suddenly playing dead. After a search on the soft sand, we found they were hiding in and on the dry shrub bushes and would drop to the ground when disturbed. They have been identified as goblin spiders of the genus *Dalmasula* (Oonopidae) (see Figure 13), and karyotype work (photographing and pairing their chromosomes) on them shows a close resemblance to the genus *Azania lobus* (Orsolobidae).

As for the other arachnids, we found a bunch of smaller camel spiders (Solifugae), pseudoscorpions, and scorpions. While I did not take any photos of most of them, I do have this juvenile *Parabuthus brevimanus* (Buthidae) to share (see Figure 14).

To end off, this trip was very fun, and we found many exciting arachnids, many of which are new species. These arid environments, I think, are very underestimated and can have an amazing diversity of arachnids to discover. I am looking forward to future work there!



Figure 1: A new *Menemerus* sp. from Sendelingsdrif, Richtersveld National Park (RNP). Female (left) & male (right).



Figure 2: *Menemerus rubicundus* (Salticidae) female from Sendelingsdrif, RNP.



Figure 3: *Euophrys leipoldti* (Salticidae) from Sendelingsdrif, RNP. Female (left) & male (right).



Figure 4: *Australoonops granulatus* (Oonopidae) male from Sendelingsdrif, RNP.



Figure 5: *Prodidomus* sp. (Gnaphosidae) from Sendelingsdrif, RNP. Female (top) & male (bottom).



Figure 6: *Palpimanus* sp. (Palpimanidae) female from Sendelingsdrif, RNP.



Figure 7: *Psammorygma* sp. (Zodariidae) female from Sendelingsdrif, RNP.



Figure 8: *Systemoplacis* sp. (Zodariidae) female from Sendelingsdrif, RNP.



Figure 9: *Namaquarachne anulata* (Phyxelididae) from Sendelingsdrif, RNP. Female (left) & male (right).



Figure 10: *Maimuna* sp. (Agelenidae) female from Sendelingsdrif, RNP.



Figure 11: *Loxosceles pilosa* (Sicariidae) female from Sendelingsdrif, RNP.



Figure 12: *Palystella* sp. (Sparassidae) from Sendelingsdrif, RNP. Female (left) & sub-adult male (right).



Figure 13: *Dalmasula* sp. (Oonopidae) male from Sendelingsdrif, RNP.



Figure 14: *Parabuthus brevimanus* (Buthidae) juvenile from Sendelingsdrif, RNP.

Tick Bite Fever: My Experience, and What You Need to Know

by Rudi Steenkamp

What is tick bite fever?

Ticks... not many people's favourite arachnids. It's the only arachnid that you might find feeding off your blood. They are also carriers of various types of bacteria, viruses, and parasites that can cause a variety of diseases, such as Lyme disease (Europe and Asia), Rocky Mountain spotted fever (USA), Congo-Crimean haemorrhagic fever (Africa, Europe, Middle East, Asia), etc.

In South Africa, what we commonly call tick-bite fever (TBF), or spotted fever (due to the spotted rash it causes) is a bacterial infection caused by the bacterium *Rickettsia*. The most common types of TBF in South Africa are boutonneuse fever-like TBF, caused by *Rickettsia conorii*, and African TBF, caused by *R. africae* (Frean & Grayson, 2019⁴). The latter can be found in sub-Saharan Africa, the Caribbean, and Oceania. *R. aeschlimannii* and *R. mongolotimonae* have also been described in South Africa, but their contribution is unknown.

Not all ticks are infected with these bacteria, so a bite from a tick will not automatically result in TBF. Still, it's not something that should be taken lightly, since TBF can result in encephalitis (inflammation of the brain), pneumonia, and damage to the brain and heart.⁵

What kind of ticks spread TBF in South Africa?

The ticks responsible for African TBF are *Amblyomma hebraeum* and *A. variegatum*, or what we commonly call the bont tick (*bontpootbosluis*). These ticks are more associated with rural areas and are often found on livestock. According to Frean and Grayson (2019), boutonneuse fever-like TBF is usually the more severe one, and is caused by ticks that are much more common in peri-urban areas, i.e., the dog and kennel ticks (*Haemaphysalis elliptica* and *Rhipicephalus simus*). As the name suggests, these are the ticks you'd usually find on your dog (or cat). This is most likely the one I recently suffered from, seeing that 99% of the ticks we find around our plot are the ones we find on our cats, and even though we've found bont ticks here, they're of the genus *Hyalomma* and not *Amblyomma*.

My experience

Even though they're probably the most hated arachnid, they are still interesting. In my line of work, we edit quite a few academic documents; mostly with rather boring topics, so when we received a research report about heartwater disease (a tick-borne disease affecting livestock) in South Africa, I was quite excited because it was a welcome break from the usual boring topics. While we were busy editing the thesis, I was contacted by ClinVet International, a contract research organisation that offers research and development services for veterinary pharmaceutical products, to take macro photos of two species of ticks (*Ixodes scapularis* and *I. ricinus*). After taking more than 300 photos of these ticks, I told myself I'm done with ticks for a while now. Unfortunately, they weren't done with me...

⁴ Frean, J. & Grayson, W. 2019. South African tick bite fever: An overview. *Dermatopathology*, 6: 70-76.

⁵ KwaZulu-Natal Department of Health, <http://www.kznhealth.gov.za/enviro/vector/tickbite.htm>

A few days later, I felt a rather course mark on my lower back, but didn't think much of it. About four days later, one Saturday night, I had a slight headache, leg pain, and minor nausea. The following day, it got worse. The symptoms were similar to that of COVID-19. I figured it would be ironic, since the only time I left the house in about three weeks was to go to the vet. My mom, who had COVID-19 a while ago, was convinced that it was COVID-19, but I kept hoping it was just a day-long illness that would be gone the following day. Unfortunately it got worse very quickly, and by Day 2, the fever started. At first it was only about 37 degrees, but later that week it skyrocketed to almost 40 degrees. I decided to go test myself for COVID-19, and later that day, I received the results, which were negative. Okay, so it's something else then...

By Day 3 my entire body was in pain, and my legs hurt so much that I had trouble walking. I went to the doctor with the hope to at least get something for the persistent headache, which not once went away the entire week. At the doctor, I suddenly remembered the coarse mark I felt on my back and showed it to the doctor. She immediately recognised it as a tick bite, with the characteristic eschar (dead tissue that sheds or falls off from the skin). She took this photo with her cell phone (with a photo from Frean and Grayson (2019) on the right):



Tick bite, showing the dark eschar in the middle.

When she looked at my hands, she saw the rash that confirmed that it was TBF. I was quite surprised to see the spots, because they weren't there that morning. Pulling up my sleeves, I noticed that my arms were also covered in spots. Later that day, I noticed that my entire body was covered in hundreds (if not thousands) of spots. Unfortunately I didn't think of taking a photo of that, but it looked somewhat like this (the rash was fortunately not itchy or uncomfortable):



Clinical image of a maculopapular skin rash associated with *Rickettsia conorii* infection⁶

On top of that, the doctor also said I had upper respiratory infection, but that was the least of my concerns.

At the peak of the disease, I could not sleep at night. I went four days with about an hour's sleep each night, if I was lucky. My whole body shook from chills and fever. My clothes were constantly soaked in sweat; so much that it felt like I fell in a swimming pool with my clothes on. To make it worse, it was one of the coldest weeks this winter, so wearing soaked clothes exacerbated the situation. When trying to walk, it resembled more a penguin's waddle; I just couldn't take a step longer than 15 cm. I couldn't really straighten my arms because of the pain in my elbows. One morning, it took me about 10 minutes just to get out of the bath tub; I simply couldn't lift my legs. I couldn't eat for five days; it's not that I was nauseous all the time, but rather that whenever I take a bite of something, I would become nauseous and throw up. The fever made me very confused; I would aimlessly walk through the house, wondering if there's something I'm supposed to be doing... And that persistent headache that just wouldn't go away, even after drinking several pain killers... that was one of the worst things.

I was very scared that this disease would last long; like the six weeks some people had to suffer. Fortunately, by Day 7 I started feeling better, but I didn't get my hopes up because it is often a disease that comes and goes. In some cases, it can also reappear a year later without having been bitten by another tick. I just hope that this is the last time I have this disease. The sickest I've been in my life was when I had malaria after returning from Thailand and Vietnam, and TBF came rather close to that.

⁶ Frean, J. & Grayson, W. 2019. South African tick bite fever: An overview. *Dermatopathology*, 6: 70-76.

Prevention and Treatment⁷

When going into the bush or field, try to stick to a footpath and don't wander out into long grass and bushes, where ticks are mostly found. Be sure to apply a chemical repellent, such as "Peaceful Sleep". Wearing clothes that cover your arms and legs will minimise exposure. If wearing pants, tuck your pant legs into your socks. Wearing light-coloured clothing will make it easier to spot a tick on you.

After you've done some bundu bashing, make sure to check your body for ticks; this can be done by taking a shower, which will also wash off any ticks. If you do find a tick on you, or even one that has latched onto you, don't stress; it takes 24 to 48 hours for the bacteria to travel from the tick's gut into the host (Frean & Grayson, 2019). To remove a tick, use tweezers, grab the whole tick, and pull it out. It's as simple as that. Don't squash it, because TBF can (and has been) acquired by tick contents splashing into the eye (Frean & Grayson, 2019) or if you have a cut on your finger.

If you don't know how long a tick has been attached to you, keep an eye out for any symptoms such as headaches, fatigue, muscle pains, and fever. These symptoms will appear about three to five days after being bitten. Early detection and diagnosis is key; if you start experiencing these symptoms, go see a doctor immediately. Using doxycycline is very effective, and the patient usually shows improvement after 48 hours of use (Frean & Grayson, 2019). If there is no improvement, return to the doctor for another diagnosis.

Conclusion

TBF is not nice... While some people only show mild symptoms, it is more often serious, and in severe cases can even result in death in all age groups (although children and the elderly are more vulnerable).

Many people ask, what is the purpose of ticks? Their most important function is that they're a very important food source for many birds and reptiles and play an integral part in the food chain. Even the diseases they spread play a role in natural selection by eliminating weak animals from the gene pool. The point is, they do serve a purpose, and without them, many ecosystems would most likely suffer. That of course doesn't mean you have to like them or even respect them, but hopefully it will lead you to find them at least a little interesting.

⁷ NIH MedlinePlus Magazine. 2017. *Understanding and preventing tick bites*. <https://magazine.medlineplus.gov/article/understanding-and-preventing-tick-bites>.

Jarrood's Macro Photography

by Jarrod Michael Todd

I've always been one with nature, loving plants and animals and all the other little critters too. There's just something about going for a hike or camping that just brings absolute peace to my mind. Being in nature, it's always great to capture moments, scenery, and the wildlife you find with it.

Back then I only used my phone as a camera and I always tried to get the best phone at that time with a great camera; that was always a priority for me. I loved it too! Finding bugs and other creatures to photograph has always been a hobby, if I can call it that, but since I was using a phone, I never really knew much about actual photography using a DSLR camera, for instance. After joining The Spider Club of Southern Africa's Facebook page, I was hooked, not only on spiders but I was set on getting a DSLR camera. Seeing people like Rudi, Mike, Dawie, Andrea... well, the list goes on and on, but after seeing their photos, I fell in love with spiders and I too wanted to capture their beauty the way they did.

I had a look at the prices of cameras and lenses and boy, my breath was taken away. They are not cheap! I then remembered my sister had a decent camera that she used for college. She didn't really use it anymore and was happy to sell it to me. I then went on a mission to figure out this new device. I taught myself everything I know now, taking the basics from some videos on YouTube and then just fine-tuning them for my use. Here are some of my first shots I took with this first setup.



A small (3 mm) crab spider (Thomisidae)



Plain pygmy thicktail (*Pseudolychus ochraceus*); Crowned nursery web spider (*Rothus* sp.; Pisauridae)

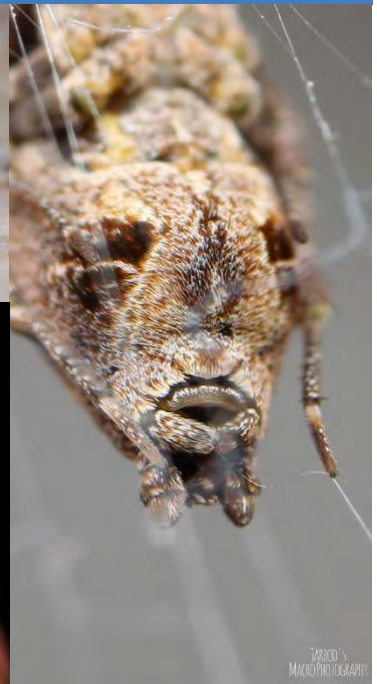
After taking some shots, I realised my lens wasn't cutting it for the tiny spiders. Because macro lenses are pricey, I went for the more basic extension tubes, which allows a much closer working distance for those real close-up shots! With this basic setup and a homemade diffuser made from cardboard paper, tin foil, and a round coffee filter, I managed to produce some decent shots.

This all comes at a price, of course, as spiders can sometimes be very tricky to photograph, because sometimes they just do not sit still! You then have to come up with ways to distract them. When I can't photograph the spider in nature, I will get the spider to a place that it can't run into grass or anything and usually give it some water, most spiders will drink and stand still for a bit for me to photograph them. I also get the very busy ones onto a stick with leaves on and let it walk to the end, it generally feels around before running back down again. This is always a lot of fun, because it's actually a challenge to get those shots. But once you look at the preview of the image on the camera and see the good shot, it brings you so much joy!

I enjoyed all this so much that I created a Facebook page called "Jarrod's Guide to Spiders, Bugs, and the Small World Around Us". Here I post images of all sorts of critters and give a short explanation of the creature so you can learn about them too. Nature through a lens is definitely something else, and especially macro, as this is stuff you don't see with the naked eye, and boy, there is an epic little world out there!

I will always have this as a hobby of mine; I just cannot get enough of it. If you've thought to try photography, I promise you won't regret it. I think I've done pretty well since getting my camera in January this year, and here are a few of my favourite images.







Anka se Goggastories

deur Anka Eichhoff

Astri het dit goed gedink dat ons weer 'n Afrikaanse stuk of twee in die nuusbrieff insluit, en het my verwys na Anka Eichhoff se *Goggastories*, wat 'n paar stories oor spinnekoppe insluit. Die volgende paar stukke is direk vanaf Anka se blog. Ons sal van haar ander stories in toekomstige nuusbriewe insluit. Om haar stories te lees, besoek haar webwerf by <https://www.kyffhauser.co.za/Goggastories.htm>



Tropiese Tentweb-Spinnekop *Cyrtoophora citricola*

Harlekein onder die spinnekoppe, verdwyningskunstenaar, syweb-argitek uit die boonste rakke, besonders aanpasbaar aan die omgewing - dis *Cyrtoophora citricola*!

Hulle kom in die verskillendste kleurvariasies voor; van wit oor geel, oranje, verskillende okker- en bruinskakerings, roesrooi, swart-en-wit, selfs olyfgroen het ek al gesien. Gewoonlik is die kopborsstuk bedek met wit of ligtegrys hare, die agterlyf is gekleur met 'n patroon en ook

knobbelige uitgroeisels. As hulle bedreig voel, laat val hulle somer hulself af op die grond en kan soos 'n verkleurmannetjie hulle kleur aan die omgewing aanpas (ligter en donkerder) om sodoende onopvindbaar te word. Hulle webbe is besonder kunstig en netjies en stabiel gewerk. Hulle werk feitlik daaglik daaraan, as dit stukkend is, behalwe die tyd (paar dae) voor vervelling. Dan sit hulle net in hulle skuilplek en vas (eet nie) om dan makliker uit die ou "pak klere" te kan klim.



Die hele webkonstruksie bestaan uit 'n wawielweb geweef in netjiese blokkies, wat in die sentrum opgetrek is, om sodoende 'n tent te vorm. Die wawielweb word rondom, veral na bo en onder, omring deur 'n raamwerk van sterk sydrade wat in alle rigtinge kruis; boontoe lyk dit soos 'n toring. Vlieënde prooi vlieg teen die drade, val af en beland op die doekweb, wat aan die kante in sekere afstande ook ietwat opgetrek is, om sodoende 'n kom te vorm. As iets in die net geval het, kom die spinnekop, wat aan die onderkant van die doekweb êrens skuil, blitsvinnig en byt die prooi van onder af.

Die skuilplek van die spinnekop kan verskillende voorkomste hê:

Soms lyk dit soos 'n dakkie van twee of drie saamgespinde droë blare, soms sit die spinnekop sonder skuiling in die web, onderkant na bo, maar dan is daar stukkie kosafval en droë plantstukkies in die web opgehang, sodat die spinnekop lyk soos een van die stukkie goed in die web.





Interessant is dat hierdie spinnekoppe of alleen in sy eie redelik groot web bly of in 'n kolonie, waar daar een web langs die volgende web gebou is (soos in 'n woonstelblok muur aan muur). Die voordeel om in 'n kolonie te bly is **beter verdedigingsstrategie, besparing van websy (=energiebesparing) en gewaarborgde kosvoorsiening**. Hierdie koloniewebbe sien ons dikwels naby water en/of 'n kunsmatige ligbron. Ons sien ook dat die produksie van eiersakke per spinnekop in 'n kolonieweb groter is as by spinnekoppe wat alleen bly.

Ten spyte van die saambly met gelyksoortige spinnekoppe in 'n kolonieweb, word grensoortreders dikwels self spinnekopkos.

So 'n kolonieweb kan duisende spinnekoppe bevat. Spinnekoppe in

so 'n kolonieweb lyk nogal na mekaar!(Wat van inteling???)



Die eiersakke hang soos 'n ketting in die middel van die web.

Kenmerkend is donkergroen vlekke, lyk soos spatsels op die eierkokonne.

Interessant is ook dat hulle verskillende kleure sy kan produseer, liggeel (raamdrade), lig- en/of donkergroen (spatsels op eierkokonne) en wit (eiersakke).

Cyrtophora spinnekoppe het vanaf die tropiese en subtropiese gebiede van die ou wêreld (Afrika) uitgebrei en is nou wêreldwyd teenwoordig, veral rondom die Middellandse See en Suid Amerika.

Dit bou graag web tussen sukkulente plante (alwyn, lang kaktusse, turksvye), maar ook in sitrusbome.

Kleurpatroonvariasies wat ek al teëgekom het



Inligtingsbronne: Ansie Dippenaar-Schoeman (Dankie!), GOGGAgids (A.D.-Schoeman, Erik Holm), Spiders of the Grassland Biome (A.D.-Schoeman, Charles Haddad), Spiders in the Savanna Biome (A.D.-Schoeman, Stefan Foord, Ch.Haddad), Spiders of the Kalahari (A.D.-Schoeman, Almie van den Berg) Filmer's Spiders (Martin Filmer revised by Norman Larsen) International Journal of Biol.Research: Combined analyses of genetic and morphological data indicate more than one species of Cyrtophora (Aranae: Araneidae) in SA (PZN Franzini, A.D.-Schoeman, K.Yessoufou, FH v/d Bank)

Teks en fotos: Anka Eichhoff

Feb.2018, updated Augustus 2021



Nog 'n Spinnekop in en om die huis uit die Familie *Filistatidae*

In Engels word hulle *crevice weaver spider* genoem, en dis presies wat hulle is: Hulle weef 'n buisie in 'n skeur, kraak, spleet of gat in die rots of muur of onder boombas, waarin hulle skuil. Bo-op die oppervlak, waarin die buisie in die kraak sit, word 'n onreëlmatige doekweb met ronde gaatjies na buite gewef. Hierdie doekweb is die vangweb vir prooi, en dis van **gepluisde sy (kribbelaatsy)** gemaak, sodat die prooidiertjies daarin verstrengel kan raak. As daar nie 'n kraak beskikbaar is nie, word die skuilbuisie deel van die vangweb. Dit is van gladde sy gemaak, digter gewef, lyk melkerig wit en lê aan die onderkant van die vangweb.

As hulle in ons huise intrek, kan hulle nogal steurend wees. Hulle hou van skilderye teen die muur en weef hul webbe teen die agterkant van die skildery. Hulle is lief vir vensterhoeke, -handvatsels en gaasvensters, agterkant van kaste en vloerlyste. Hier word die web op die vertikale oppervlak geplaas, vir 'n huisvrou 'n bron van frustrasie, want die skoonmaak is lastig en tydrowend. Stof en uitgesuigde klein insekte versamel tog te graag op die gepluisde sy, dan lyk die web vuilgrys.



Aangesien hierdie spinnekop eers onlangs in Suidafrika opgemerk is, is daaroor nog min navorsing gedoen. Dit is goed moontlik, dat dit van 'n ander kontinent ingebring is. Ons weet nog nie veel nie. Wat ons wel weet is dat:

- dit nie giftig is vir mense nie, slegs vir insekte
- dit baie muskiete en vlieë vang
- dit nagaktief is
- dit 'n paar jaar kan oud word
- hulle alleenlopers is, wil sê, elke spinnekop het sy eie plekkie, (maar daar kan BAIE langsmekaar onder 'n reuse vangweb in 'n kolonie saam bly, soos op 'n groot boom, wat ek in Grootfontein (Namibië) gesien het. Die boomstam was van onder af na bo 3 tot 5m hoog heeltemal toegespin met web – wit kleur op die foto is web)

Reën spoel die vangwebbe van hierdie spinnekoppe van bome en/of mure heeltemal af. Ons kan probeer om gereeld die spinnerakke met 'n stoflap of sagte besem af te vee, eerder as om die spinnekoppe te probeer dood te "DOOM". (Die Doom is vir ons mense meer skadelik as vir spinnekoppe!)

Wat hierdie spinnekop nog interessant maak is, hoe dit sy spin. Die sy word deur kliere as 'n vloeistof vrygestel. Met die agterste paar bene word die systringe uitgetrek en met 'n "kammetjie", die **kalamistrum**, gepluis. Een string sy bestaan uit 'n paar hare, wat dig langsmekaar in lyn of ook in bondels gerangskik is.



Op ons plaaswerf het ek hierdie spinnekoppe in verskillende kleur- en patroonvariasies gesien. Of dit slegs kleurpatroonvariasies is of dalk verskillende spesies is nie bekend nie.



Inligtingsbronne: Ansie Dippenaar-Schoeman, private conversation, GOGGAgids (mede-outeur Erik Holm), Field Guide to web dwellers

Tharina Bird, Juri Marusik (Dankie vir inligting!)

Filmer's Spiders(Martin Filmer revised by Norman Larsen)

3 fotos oor spinproses en kalamistrum: copies Google

Teks en res fotos: Anka Eichhoff

(Sept.2017 updated Augustus 2021)

Sandhoop spinnekop *Pionothele gobabeb*



☛ Dis al wat 'n mens gewoonlik van die *Pionothele gobabeb* spinnekop te siene kry: 'n Vuisgroot sandhopie sit teen die onderste helling van 'n sandduin by Gobabeb. Hierdie hope verskyn gewoonlik in die wintermaande by die duine suid van die Kuisebrivier en op die gruisvlak soos by die terrein van Gobabeb Navorsingstasie self, waar die ondergrond onderkant die sandhopie nie so sag is soos by die duine nie. Die sand by die duine is droog en fyn, die grond van die gruisvlakte is harder en growwer, dus twee heeltemal verskillende tipes grond; **maar die hopies lyk dieselfde!**

As 'n mens aan die sandhoop vat, voel dit poeiersag en ietwat pofferig. Binne-in die sandhoop "staan" 'n syagtige buis, wat natuurlik opreggehou word deur die omringende sand. Die buis bestaan uit 'n plat doekweb wat in die lengte gevou is om 'n buis te vorm.

Hoekom bly die hopies netso staan en val nie plat nie?

Die spinnekoppe grawe 'n tunnel 20 cm en dieper in die grond. Die losgemaakte grond wat moet uit, word met hulp van sy gebind en in bondeltjies uit die gat gedra en daar opgehoop. Hierdie bondeltjies gee aan die hoop die wolkerige voorkoms. In hierdie poeiersandhoop staan die sybuis en lei na die ondergrondse tunnel. - Dis al wat ek kon sien, geen teken van een of ander diertjie nie!

Die was natuurlik diep onder in sy grondtunnel in veiligheid.

Verdere navraag het my gebring tot by 'n **spinnekop!**

Deur die sybuis beweeg die spinnekop van onder na bo om te gaan jag in die nag en dan weer af na

onder, waar dit skuil. Die gang se wande word met spinnekopsy versterk, sodat dit nie inmekaarstort nie.

Die spinnekop se naam is *Pionothele gobabeb*, en sover ons weet, kom dit net in die area by Gobabeb voor. Dit is een van die Mygalomorphe spinnekoppe (Fam Nemesiidae). Valdeur- en bobbejaanspinnekoppe is ook Mygalomorphe.

Verdere interessante inligting:

- Volgens observasies by Gobabeb gedoen, bly die spinnekoppe in kolonies.
- Hulle is **winter- en nagaktief**, waarskynlik, omdat die sterker en oorheersende (goed bekende) White Lady (*Leucorchestris arenicola*) gedurende die wintermaande rus en sodoende plek maak vir *Pionothele gobabeb*.
- Hulle vreet nagaktiewe kewers soos toktokkies.
- Hulle kan **baie lank** in hulle tunnels sonder kos bly.
- Hulle word oud, twee jaar of moontlik ook meer.
- Hulle is spesiaal aangepas vir 'n bestaan in hierdie baie moeilike omgewings- en klimaatstoestande.



Nog ietsie oor die uitdagings vir diere wat in die woestynsand lewe:

In die somer verhit die boonste laag van die grondoppervlak in die woestyn van 60 tot 70°C. Om vir die hoë temperature te skuil, gaan baie van hulle **af** in die grond/sand (tot 120 cm diep!!), waar dit baie koeler is.

'n Verdere uitdaging is die die verskuiwing van die sand deur die wind; gate, gange, skuilings word toegegooi met sand.

Aangesien dit in die woestyn min of glad nie reën nie, het die diere geleer, om oggendmis op verskeie maniere op te vang.

Die habitat woestyn bly vol verrassings, dis verstommend hoe alle lewensvorme (mense ingesluit) planne gemaak het om hier te oorlewe.

Inligtingsbronne: Joh Henschel (DANKE!)

Wetenskaplike "papers":

1. A new species of *Pionothele* from Gobabeb, Namibia (Araneae, Mygalomorphe, Nemesiidae) deur Jason E Bond en Trip Lamb
 2. Psammophily in Desert-Spiders deur Joh Henschel
 3. The influence of food supply on foraging behaviour in a desert spider deur Y. Lubin en J. Henschel
- GOGGAgids DIE GELEEDPOTIGES VAN SUIDER-AFRIKA deur Erik Holm en Ansie Dippenaar-Schoeman
- Foto van spinnekop *Pionothele gobabeb* manlike dier: Joh Henschel (kopieregte voorbehou)
- Foto van sand gebind deur spinnekopsy: Alex Dreyer (dankie)
- Teks en res fotos: Anka Eichhoff

September 2021

Spring Spider Drawing Competition

Here are the results of our “Spring Spider” drawing competition. Members of our Facebook group were requested to draw a “spring spider”, using their imagination.

Bernice van Zyl got the most votes in the themed category. Second place goes to Luna Michelle Mouton, and third place goes to Nicolette Josling.

1



2



3



In the unthemed category, Bernice van Zyl got both first and second place, while third place went to our matriarch, Astri Leroy, with her “feather-legged spider”.



There were still not enough entries to create different categories. If we can get at least five drawings from children, we can create a children’s category. Unfortunately, only two children submitted entries this season. For the winter poll we received seven children’s drawings, but I didn’t think about creating a children’s category back then.

I would love if we can have an adult and children category and do away with the “unthemed” category, but in both polls there were entries that didn’t match the seasonal theme, and I didn’t want to exclude those pictures.

Anyway, thank you for all the entries, and please consider participating for the Summer Spider drawing competition. Even if you just put a pair of sunglasses on your spider, it would count as a “themed” entry. Sure, the realistic drawings are awesome, but the main point of this competition is for people to have fun, so let your imagination run wild!

Spider of the Month

Here are the spiders of the month for July, August, and September. Members on our Facebook group nominate photos throughout the month, and at the beginning of each month, vote in a poll.

JULY



(1) Beetle crab spider (*Mystaria* sp.), Bruce Blake. (2) Jumping spider (*Rhene konradi*), Rudi Steenkamp. (3) Orange lungless spider (*Caponia* sp.), Jarrod Todd. (4) Flower crab spider (*Thomisus* sp.), Hannes Claassens. (5) Black button spider (*Latrodectus renivulvatus*), Jarrod Todd.

AUGUST



(1) Palp-footed spider (*Palpimanus* sp.), Ruan Booysen. (2) Slim-legged wolf spider (*Pardosa* sp.), Jarrod Michael Todd. (3) Jumping spider (*Hyllus* sp.), Hannes Claassens. (4) Flower crab spider (*Thomisus* sp.), Mike Green. (5) Burrowing ant spider (*Psammorygma* sp.), Rudi Steenkamp.

SEPTEMBER

1



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2



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5



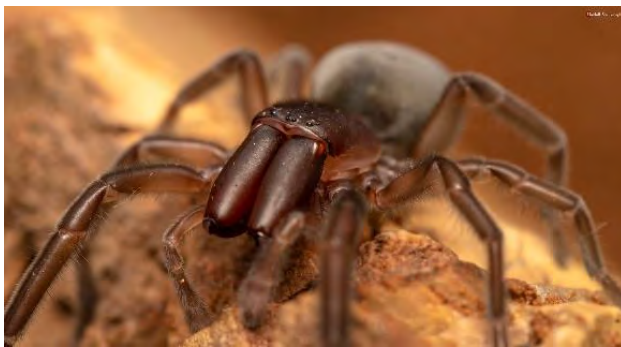
(1) Fiery jumping spider (*Evarcha ignea*), Robert Wienand. (2) Strawberry theridiid (cf. *Ruborridion* sp.), Bruce Blake. (3) Green tree huntsman (*Olios* cf. *auricomis*), Robert Wienand. (4) Green jellybean comb-footed spider (Theridiidae), Bruce Blake. (5) Dancing white lady (*Leucorchestris arenicola*), Madelaine Maddy Laubscher.

Honorary Mention

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



One of the “strawberry theridiids” that is suspected to be in the genus *Ruborridion*. Found and photographed by Andrea Sander in Drummond, KZN.



Left: A long-jawed intertidal spider (*Desis formidabilis*; Desidae), photographed by Rudi Steenkamp. **Right:** A tree trapdoor spider (*Moggridgea* sp.; Migidae) photographed by Ruan Booysen. Both spiders were found during the Northern Cape fieldwork by Haddad, Vickers, and Booysen.

On a Lighter Note

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



Roxy Sanders

👤 · 8 September at 17:04 · 🌐

...

Hey everyone thanks for accepting me.

Just thought I'd introduce myself with a tale of an unsuspecting ear and a Salticidae with 0 boundaries!

On a lovely sunny day in our garden. Hubby suddenly felt an odd tickle by his ear. After a little swipe he thought nothing more of what may be learking on his body.

About 10 mins later, I look over at hubby and his eyes are like saucers, he is literally squirming from grillerigness, fear and horror on his face.

On seeing his complete shock, I enquired what was wrong. Hardly able to speak a sqwark escapes his lips "something is in my ear" 🐛 on hearing this I near fainted so can't imagine the terror he felt.

I requested he lie on my lap whilst I took a tiny torch and peered into this most delicate area. To my surprise, I saw 8 tiny eyes peering back at me and 2 tiny arms waving at me in a motion I'm sure meant "bugger off".

On learning a naughty little spider had decided to make his ear home, hubby nearly died on the spot. Fearing I may need to start recucitation efforts. I moved quickly to rid his precious homely orifice of the very rude intruder.

I grabbed small tweezers but as I tried to insert them hubby started screaming. The naughty spider was now crawling further back and breakdancing on his ear drum.

Clearly this spider has no clue about common human decency! So I grabbed a teaspoon and the olive oil. Trying not to drown the little ear invader (nobody wants a murder on their hands), I proceed to drop two drops of oil in hubbies ear.

Within seconds this tiny spider leaps out hubbies ear, landing on his ear lobe. Clearly furious as he shakes his tiny paws in my direction. I quickly move to close the ear hole. This very naughty little guy gives one last shake of his paw, and an 8 eyed stink eye, jumps off hubbies head and scurries across the floor. Though due to the oil it was more like ice skating across the floor.

We all including this deardevil with 8 legs, just survived the very traumatic event....so if you ever have the misfortune of a little spider deciding to call your ear hole home! Olive oil works wonders in evicting unwanted squatters!



199

61 comments 2 shares



Lorinda Stoltz



· 26 August at 17:20 ·



I noticed last season that Saltis loved an empty herb planter in my garden, so I ended up not planting a single thing in it - I was not popular 😊 I decided to revamp the plant-box for this season - Jumping Spiders now have a master suite with rooftop splash pool and two thatched chalets, all set in a beautifully landscaped garden.





Joa van Niekerk

18 July · 🌐



Morning spider lovers... Just want to thank this amazing group for educating me and everyone else... The other day I was helping my fiancé strip down a car for spray painting, he noticed a spider near the engine and asked me to take a look because he wants to kill it but knows I would want to identify it first... It was a beautiful brown button, belly up, curled up legs, playing dead on her web... We could clearly see the red hour glass which helped identify her...

Unfortunately we can't keep our phones with us while stripping down the car so I couldn't get a photo... But I made him relocate her into the field and take down her web instead of killing her... The whole time he's complaining that he was taught to kill spiders and she's dangerous while I'm saying I was taught that too but this group taught me to relocate and that she'd rather play dead than bite because she's shy... So she was safely relocated and my fiancé and I now both have the honour of saying we relocated a brown button because of this group 😊😊😊



33

3 comments

Upcoming Events

DIARY 2021 www.spiderclub.co.za



SUNDAY 10 OCTOBER

8.30 am till whenever

MORELETAKLOOF NATURE RESERVE

This is a ±100 ha reserve in suburban Pretoria with streams, forest, rocky outcrops, abundant birdlife, wild game, and arachnids. Meet in the parking area just inside the entrance, on the corner of Palmer and Helios Street, -25.817141, 28.291075. This is a follow-up visit to this lovely small reserve in Pretoria. We will try to add to the species list from our previous visits. A species list will be available on the day for you to tick off or add to. **Book on info@spiderclub.co.za, SMS 067 833 2191, or on our Facebook page.** When booking, please give us your cell phone number and we will set up a WhatsApp group for the event.



SUNDAY 21 NOVEMBER

8.30 am to 2 pm

Spider Walk on the grounds of the ARC (Agricultural Research Council), Roodeplaat

The walk will be followed by a quick tour of the Arachnology section, the National Collection of Arachnida, and an explanation of what the scientists do there. Our hosts are Robin Lyle and Petro Marais. Booking is essential as we have to supply an attendance list to security. **Book on info@spiderclub.co.za, SMS 067 833 2191, or on our Facebook page.** When booking, please give us your cell phone number and we will set up a WhatsApp group for the event.

Directions: From Johannesburg or Pretoria via N1 highway toll route, exit the N1 at the Sefako Makgatho Drive (R513) Zambesi toll gate and turn right under the highway towards Cullinan. At the second set of robots turn left onto the R573 towards Kwa Mhlanga (the Moloto Road). Travel for 11 km and at the top of a hill at 11 km (-25.61475, 28.35438) there's a small sign for ARC PPRI. **Turn left.** Sign in at security, giving Robin Lyle as the person you will visit. Go over one speed bump. Turn first left and first left again and park in front of Biosystematics building. Meet in the lobby.

Please bring a picnic lunch.

*We charge for attendance at field and certain other events: **R50 per adult and R10 per child 11 years and under, cash only, with the option of paying R150 PER FAMILY for annual subscription.** Some venues will also require an entrance fee that 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 067 833 2191 or on our Facebook page.** When booking, please give us your cell phone number and we will set up a WhatsApp group for the event.*



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

Watch this space!

Keep your eyes on your e-mail and our Facebook page as other events may be organized, 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 a.m. and 12 noon to demonstrate and talk about SPIDERS!