

Spider Recording Scheme News

July 2010, No. 67

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My thanks to those who have contributed to this issue. S.R.S. News No. 68 will be published in November 2010. Please send contributions by the end of September at the latest to Peter Harvey, 32 Lodge Lane, GRAYS, Essex, RM16 2YP; e-mail: srs@britishspiders.org.uk or grays@peterharvey.freemove.co.uk. The newsletter depends on your contributions!

Editorial

I am very grateful to the contributors who have provided articles for this issue. Please keep providing articles. If you haven't previously provided articles, consider writing something (short or long) on any item or observation you find of interest - the newsletter depends on contributions from you!

As always many thanks are due to those Area Organisers, MapMate users and other recorders who have provided their records to the scheme. Data provided directly through MapMate will become available on the new SRS website much sooner than data provided in other


The draft new SRS website home page

Spider Recording Scheme

the national recording scheme for spiders in Britain.

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Welcome




One of the main aims of the recording scheme is to provide up-to-date data on the distribution of spiders in Britain. The data available on this website have been gathered by the [Spider Recording Scheme \(SRS\)](#) since 1987. The distribution maps and summary charts on this website are generated from the latest data available to the recording scheme. If you can add to these, please provide your data to the scheme through your Area Organiser or [contact us](#). Overall coverage is good, although not surprisingly it is patchy in some areas with a number of counties intensively recorded, whilst other areas remain more poorly covered.

Provisional maps with species accounts and phenology charts were published in 2002 and the [provisional atlas](#) provides a very great amount of new information on every British species. The 647 species accounts were written by volunteer authors, without which the text could not have been produced in the timescale available. There are now currently 658 species of spider established in Britain, increased from 645 British species in the Araneae check list published in 2000 by Merrett & Murphy.



Since 2002 the Spider Recording Scheme has placed greater emphasis on autecology and phenology, and has the following [objectives](#). In order to achieve these objectives, arachnologists should, as far as possible, [record spiders](#) using the [structured methodology](#) developed after the publication of the provisional atlas. Please don't be put off by what may seem like an undue demand for detail. In practice the minimum acceptable record to the scheme would comprise date, locality, 4-figure grid reference, collector and identifier, preferably with information on habitat. On the other hand, remember that information not submitted is effectively lost and cannot help improve our understanding. You can see examples of what our objectives can provide for each species using the [A-Z Species Index](#) or [find out more...](#)

The Spider Recording Scheme Newsletter is issued three times a year (March, July and November) and contains articles and notes, submitted by recorders on all aspects of the recording of spiders, as well as regular updates on the progress being made in the recording scheme. Since November 2002 the SRS News has been incorporated with the British Arachnological Society Newsletter, but is also [available on-line](#) to anyone who is not a member of the Society.

[find out more...](#)



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formats, since it will not require importing or computerisation with the subsequent greater need for validation.

The national status review for spiders provided to JNCC in November 2009 is still with JNCC and we are uncertain at present when it will be published.

Work on a **Spider Recording Scheme website** has finally progressed and the main stage of development is now complete. You can see the results at <http://srs.britishspiders.org.uk> and I hope you will find it a useful resource. The website is available to all, but you can obtain additional information and functionality by registering and logging on using the log-on link at the bottom right of the website pages. The data supporting the national and regional maps on the website is as up to date as the records in the master SRS MapMate database, and new data can be uploaded directly to the website by running the special software developed for this purpose by Teknica Ltd. This means the maps are the very latest picture of spider recording. The software uploads all the distributional and recorded phase 2 habitat, site-related information, structural habitat and habitat detail or method provided by recorders in MapMate, so there is a massive amount of new summary data available to all.

Every species has a summary page which provides the national map, text (currently derived either from the provisional atlas or the status review in preparation), a male/female adult season chart, broad habitat, sub-habitat, structural habitat and habitat details charts. Links to summary charts for the management, substrate and hydrology recorded at locations for the spider are provided. These are all constructed from the data held on the website. Any registered user may upload images which will be included on this page if they use the taxon as the image subject field.

A link to regional maps are provided, and these

Spider Recording Scheme
The national recording scheme for spiders in Britain.

Summary for *Pardosa pullata*
National Distribution

Records: 16290
First Record: 1858
Last Record: 2010
Habitats: 1570

ID	Location	Position	Date	Sex	Recorder	Entered
1	Lilford Sand Pit, Baddinton, NE Cambs	52.667500	11 Aug 1958	♂	Harvey, P.H.	Harvey, P.H.
2	Lilford Sand Pit	52.667500	25 Aug 2009		Harvey, P.H.	Harvey, P.H.
3	Lilford Sand Pit, Baddinton, NE Cambs	52.667500	27 Apr 2009	♂	Harvey, P.H.	Harvey, P.H.

regions are based on the Area Organiser areas which we use to manage the scheme. These include regional adult season, broad and structural habitat summary charts for the data available in that region - if there are no or few data, then please help to add to this! You can save your favourite region so that it is remembered for future use, and change this at any time. If you are a registered

member of the BAS or SRS and you are logged-on, then you can click on the dots on these maps and see the record information behind them. The site grid reference information is linked to a google map view of the recorded location.

Area Organisers and members of BAS Council will be given Administrator access, which will allow them to

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Distribution of *Pardosa pullata*

Select species and region:
Pardosa pullata Britain

Records in Table:

ID	Location	Position	Date	Sex	Recorder	Entered
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allocate their own local recorders as members, and to act as their mentors. Administrators can edit the species text on the Summary pages, so that these will form an evolving, rather than fixed, resource. Any logged-on user can add species notes, allocated to either national or regional level, so that we can begin to build up species information from all recorders, based on both a national or regional perspective.

A Forum is available for logged-on users to post observations, images, questions etc., and like much of the website this will depend on you to contribute and provide responses to other people's questions or observations. It can also be used to post information on meetings etc. This facility is still being developed, with the idea that it will provide a regional as well as national forum. All members will be able to contribute to 'collaborative' species pages, upload images for use in these and other pages, and edit existing text. These will be an evolving resource which can be used to start to build up information and guidance on any aspects which relate to each particular species, such as information which relates to regional and national ecology, identification guidance, how to find a species, or anything else which you think should be included.

A start has been made on allowing users to build up a resource on sites which they know have spider interest. Any logged-on user can submit site details using a site form, and edit existing site information. Images uploaded using the site name as subject will automatically be used in the site account page. A boundary digitiser allows users to draw a polygon or site boundary and save for future use in these pages.

More developments are planned and many more are possible - please make suggestions for improvements either directly to myself or through the website contact facility.

Further observations on the Wasp Spider *Argiope bruennichi* at Coombe Hill, Wotton-under-Edge

by David Haigh

In my report 'Spiders in Gloucestershire 2004' published in *The Gloucestershire Naturalist* No 16, 2005 I said that 'looked for but as yet unrecorded in Gloucestershire are *Argiope bruennichi*, the Raft Spider *Dolomedes fimbriatus* and the Water Spider *Argyroneta aquatica*.'

In September 2008 *Argiope bruennichi* was found and photographed by Rosalind John and Chris Wiltshire on September 14th at Coombe Hill, Wotton-u-Edge. I believe this is a new county record, and GNS News, March 2009 carried my article on this discovery and something of the Wasp Spider's history in Britain and its habits. It was hoped to visit the site in 2009 to survey a possible population.

In the company of Chris Wiltshire (Butterfly Recorder) and Lin Callard, a Gloucestershire Invertebrate Group member, I visited the site on September 8th. Fortunately Chris led us to the site as he remembered it in 2008 and eventually a spider was discovered in the centre of its web. Surprisingly for such a large well marked spider it was difficult to spot, but 'getting our eye in' we went on to discover a further 13 individuals (all females) and 3 cocoons, confirming a breeding population. The spider was found over a limited area towards the top of a steep, well vegetated slope, north-east of Wotton-under-Edge above the B4058 at an altitude of 170 metres. Aspect is south facing. The webs were spun across 'hollows' between tussocks of Tor Grass and hummocks of Common Rock Rose, rarely above knee height. The grassland seemed to be lightly grazed and there was a plant community comprising Eyebright (*Euphrasia* spp), Salad Burnet, Greater Knapweed, Greater Hawkbit, Yellow Rattle, Yellow-wort and Fairy Flax. Next to 3 webs were single cocoons. These are brown, flask-shaped up to 30mm in height and with a short neck. As eggs, protected in this egg case the spider overwinters, hatching in the spring and achieving maturity in late summer. We did not find the male. For such a large spider to reach maturity in about 6 months requires an abundant food source. It is suggested that grasshoppers are the main prey species and while we did not see grasshoppers on our visit I did find a male and female Long-winged Conehead (*Conocephalus discolor*), a bush cricket, a relative newcomer to our county and no doubt welcomed by *Argiope*.

Other orb-web spinning spiders seen at Coombe Hill were *Araneus diadematus* and *Araneus quadratus* occupying the same niche as *Argiope*. Juveniles of *Pisaura mirabilis*, a hunting spider were common and at soil level were *Pachygnatha clercki* and the crab spider *Xysticus erraticus*.

Managing the habitat to the best advantage of *Argiope* requires that grazing pressure is not too great and a sward of mixed height and species is advised.

This is the only known colony in Gloucestershire and I would encourage hill walkers, botanists, bird watchers and countryside lovers to report further sightings of this exotic looking spider.

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Spiders in Gloucestershire 2009

by David Haigh

I was able to attend 7 Gloucestershire Invertebrate Group field meetings where spider recording ranged from the Cotswolds, Water Park and Forest of Dean. In addition visits were made to Badgeworth Nature Reserve, Whelford Pools, Pate's Grammar School Nature Area and the Jenner Garden in Cheltenham. I am grateful to Chris Wiltshire for leading myself and Lin Callard to the site of *Argiope bruennichi*, (The Wasp Spider) at Coombe Hill, Wotton u- Edge in September. In the company of Ellie Phillips, Conservation Officer for Cleeve Common and David Long we located the site of *Atypus affinis* (The Purse Web Spider) in August.

The status of 'rare' spiders is still under review. I shall indicate current status and the provisional IUCN status. There were no new county records but many of the county's interesting records were refinds on known sites and encouragingly from new sites.

Argiope bruennichi, Nationally Scarce Nb, IUCN LC (Least Concern)

Following up the initial discovery of a single female of the 'Wasp Spider' by Rosalind John and Chris Wiltshire at Coombe Hill, Wotton -u- Edge, in September 2008 a return visit was made to the site on September 8th 2009 (see previous article). It will be interesting to revisit the site in 2010 and discover if the spider has survived the severe weather this winter.

Segestria florentina, Introduced, described as Scarce in the Provisional Atlas of British Spiders, 2002 (PABS)

Three further sightings of this large wall-dwelling spider were received, a) Stonehouse, Stroud, female, February 2nd, record from Dr. Geoff Oxford; b) Wickwar, male and female, August 15th, record from John Harper; c) Tredworth, dislodged from chimney stack brickwork on a Victorian terrace, 9 metres above ground, November, record from Tony Taylor.

Atypus affinis, Local, IUCN LC (Scarce B)

A tube of this spider was found in August on Cleeve Hill. This is confirmation of its presence since its first discovery here by Colin Twissell in 1998. Excavation of the soil revealed the tube some 30cms long inside which was a female with young. After photography by Ellie Phillips the spider and young were carefully reinstated below ground. Cleeve Hill is one of only 3 known sites in the county where The Purse Web Spider is known to occur.

Micrommata virescens, Local, IUCN LC (Scarce A)

John Widgery recorded a sub-adult female at Symonds Yat, August 6th. This is the 17th record since the first in 1930. This increasingly rare spider favours sunny glades and rides within mature woodland.

Nigma walckenaeri, Nationally Scarce Na, IUCN LC (Scarce B)

First recorded at Alderton in 1993 by Nigel Burston, *N. walckenaeri* is spreading with records from the 10km squares, SO 82,92,93 and SP03. I recorded it for a second time at Pate's Grammar School Nature Area, July 16th. John Widgery contributed 10 records from sites ranging from Apperley to Woodmancote., 4 tetrads in all, August to October. In November I found a female in a groove on my garage door in Cheltenham. See TGN No 16 for photograph (Colin Twissell).

Zilla diodia, Nationally Scarce Nb, IUCN LC

A sub-adult female was beaten from *Cupressus* at the Jenner Garden in Cheltenham, October 28th. This is the first record for vc 33 and the second east of the River Severn.

Thyreosthenius biovatus, Local, IUCN LC (Scarce A)

A second visit to Ley Park Wood, September 12th produced a further 5 females from nest mounds of *Formica rufa*; 3 of the females taken from an apparently deserted nest, whilst mature,

were very small, less than 1.5mm. The other 2 were taken from active nests and were more than 2mm.

Lepthyphantes leprosus

“Common and probably very under-recorded because its main habitat is inside houses”. (PABS). John Harper recorded a male in cellars at Wickwar, October 31st. This would appear to be the first record for vc 34. Previous county records are from Gloucester Cathedral, Churchdown, Cheltenham and Quedgeley. – all vc 33. There are several ‘house-bound’ spiders, poorly recorded, and I would welcome records of spiders from inside houses, cellars, greenhouses and on outside walls.

Summary of other noteworthy spiders

Two spiders which seem to have a preference for quality herb-rich limestone grassland are:- *Xysticus bifasciatus*, male, Nationally Scarce Nb, IUCN LC (Scarce A), Whittington Lodge Farm, May 24th, recorder Colin Twissell, 5th county record and *Cercidia prominens*, Nationally Local, IUCN LC (Scarce B), Strawberry Banks, October 4th, recorded from 12 sites.

Hyptiotes paradoxus, RDB3, IUCN LC (Scarce A)

An adult male was beaten from yew by Tony Taylor at Ley Park Wood, September 12th. Apart from Painswick Churchyard, vc33 all other county records are from west of the River Severn, vc34.

The Cotswold Water Park produced a number of interesting records:-

Microlinyphia impigra, Nationally Local, Lake 42, Lower Mill, August 42, August 16th. 4th county record.

Larinioides sclopetarius, Nationally Local, On notice board Lake 42, Lower Mill, August 16th. Records are confined to the Gloucester-Sharpness Canal, Stroudwater Canal and the Cotswold Water Park.

Tetragnatha nigrita, Nationally Local, Whelford Pools, 2 males, June 24th, 6th county record.

Philodromus albidus, Nationally Scarce Nb, IUCN LC. Whelford Pools, June 24th.

Pit-fall Trapping has continued at Ashleworth Ham and Coombe Hill and once again 2 provisionally Vulnerable spiders have been identified,

Halorates distinctus, Nationally Local, IUCN Vulnerable, 5 males present at Ashleworth Ham, the 2nd record for this site. This wetland spider was first recorded at Coombe Hill, June 2000.

Trochosa spinipalpis, Nationally Local, IUCN Scarce B, a single male at Coombe Hill, May/June, 6th county record.

Of all enquiries I receive about spiders the most frequent must be those for the crab spider *Misumena vatia*. It is fairly common in the county and is included in Bristowe’s county lists (1939) and R.S. George’s (1957). I have 53 records dating back to 1972. It is widespread in southern England, the Midlands being its northerly limit. Females mature in early summer and can be found sitting on a flower head waiting for prey. The colour of the female varies through white, pale green to yellow and the spider frequently matches the flower colour. This cryptic colouring confers advantage catching their prey and protection against predators. David Iliff provided a photograph for GNS News Winter 2007 of the white form with its prey, the hoverfly *Episyrphus balteatus*. David has also photographed a further colour variant, white with 2 red dorso-lateral lines which appears to be genetically determined and unaffected by background colour. An observation from Cairncross Road, Stroud in July was of the yellow form on Evening Primrose, *Oenothera* sp. Flower-rich scrubby areas, wood margins, and hedgerows are favoured habitats with *Rubus* flowers, Ox-eye daisy and umbelliferous plants being common flower choices.

A recent ‘Countryfile’ programme on BBC1, February 7th, showed the ‘Cave Spider’ (*Meta menardi*) being translocated in the Yorkshire Dales from stone buildings to a cave system. Apparently ‘cavers’ had brought the

spiders out on their back packs from below ground and then the spiders ‘got off’ and built up a large colony inside the buildings. It was felt that if the buildings were to be used for accommodation then ‘Cave Spiders’ were not fit co-habitees.

Like many ‘house-bound’ spiders, the Cave Spider is probably under-recorded due to its specific habitat preferences. In Gloucestershire the bulk of ‘Cave Spider’ records have been received from David Priddis while surveying bat roosts in the Forest of Dean. The 50 records from mines, disused railway tunnels, caves and an ice-house also include records of hibernating Herald moths, Peacock and Small Tortoiseshell butterflies, no doubt prey for the ‘Cave Spiders’. A very visible feature of a ‘Cave Spider’ colony are the large white pendant egg sacs. One record by myself is from inside a dumped galvanised water tank within deep woodland at Ban-y-Gor Nature Reserve.

Related to the ‘Cave Spider’ is *Meta bourneti*, Nationally Scarce Nb and recorded at just 2 sites, an air-raid shelter at Rendcomb, 1947 and cellars in the ‘Old Rectory’ Haresfield, 1969. There may be under-recording of this species, as it closely resembles *Meta menardi*.

I recently reviewed spider records for Gloucestershire. Bristowe (1939), produced a check list of British spiders, county by county. R. S. George (1957) produced a list of spiders recorded from Gloucestershire and since the 1970s further recording has been undertaken. Bristowe’s list totalled 190 species while that of R.S. George’s 204. Since 1970 there has been an increase in confirmed records and now the county total is 341 with 2 doubtful. It is noted that 14 species present on the Bristowe and George lists have not been recorded in the last 40 years. The status of county rarities stands at present :- RDB 3 --- 4; Na --- 11; Nb --- 24. The UK total of spider species is 646.

May I thank those contributors mentioned in the text and others who have given me records, often by means of the Internet.

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