

# Spider Recording Scheme News

## Spring 2014, No. 78

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SRS website: <http://srs.britishspiders.org.uk>

My thanks to those who have contributed to this issue. S.R.S. News No. 79 will be published in Summer 2014. Please send contributions by the end of June 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

As always, thank you to the contributors who have provided articles for this issue. Please help future issues by providing articles, short or longer, on interesting discoveries and observations.

We now have 960,437 SRS records in total in MapMate, 404,526 of which have SRS Phase 2 site-related information on broad habitat and other site-related data. All these data are uploaded and summarised on the SRS website.

We have to date had 148,851 visits, 99,446 unique visitors and 833,177 page views from 166 countries/territories since the Spider and Harvestmen Recording Scheme website went live in July 2010. After the huge peaks of people accessing the Spider and Harvestman Recording Scheme website in October due to the media reports about false widow spiders, there have been several much smaller peaks related to the same media interest.

Email enquiries resulting from the SRS website "Contact us" page continue to provide a steady number of records for spiders such as *Zygiella x-notata*, *Steatoda bipunctata*, *Steatoda grossa*, some *Steatoda nobilis*, *Araneus diadematus*, *Amaurobius similis* and occasional other species.

More *Zoropsis spinimana* records have been submitted, supported by photographs and/or specimens, indicating the continued establishment and spread of this spider in the London area, with new records from the Acton and Richmond areas (see Fig. 1).



**Figure 1.** *Zoropsis spinimana* in London W3 area.  
Photograph © Coellie Hamlyn

### SRS Website User Interests and summary

Registered users on the SRS website at <http://srs.britishspiders.org.uk> can submit information about their arachnological interests, something which was put in place about two years ago, to gather information which might help the British Arachnological Society make decisions about what to provide members. There are now enough submissions to provide some useful information, and this is summarised below:

Interest	Count
Britain/UK	33
Europe	9
Worldwide	9
Harvestmen	15
Pseudoscorpions	10
Spiders	28
Conservation and management	18
Ecology	22
Behaviour	15
Taxonomy	5
Genetics	4
General wildlife	28
Other	8

### Some common identification problems

by Peter Harvey

For some years now, we have been providing identification guidance in the SRS News and on the website to help avoid problems in identification with species that often cause problems, sometimes even for experienced arachnologists. I would like to briefly discuss three species pairs where I believe our database may contain a substantial number of misidentifications and which in some cases are still being misidentified. These are *Meta menardi* / *M. bourneti*, *Pocadicnemis pumila* / *juncea* and *Dysdera erythrina* / *D. crocata*.

#### *Meta bourneti* / *menardi*

The problem with *Meta menardi* and *M. bourneti* is one almost certainly caused by the assumption, especially in the past, that the cave spider found was *M. menardi*, so

that specimens were not collected to be verified under a microscope. We are now seeing an increasing number of cave spiders being recognised as *M. bourneti* from microscopical examination of adults, and hopefully we will be able to move towards a position where we have a better understanding of any ecological preferences and differences between the two species, as well as a clearer idea of the reliability of features such as annulations on the legs in helping distinguish the species pair in the field or from photographs.

BAS member Will Whalley has started looking at *Meta* spiders in caves in Derbyshire and is recording environmental conditions in the caves. This should help establish not only whether *Meta bourneti* is found in Derbyshire (we have no previous records for the county) or is likely to be under-recorded, especially in the northern counties, but also whether there are particular conditions associated with the two species.

### *Pocadicnemis pumila* / *juncea*

Distinguishing this species pair, particularly females, can prove difficult and requires that the specimens are carefully positioned so that the important features of the female epigynes and male palps can be clearly seen. The problem is mainly restricted to females, where the differences between the epigynes can be very difficult.

The problem arises because the epigynes are variable in appearance. In both species the epigyne projects ventrally from the underside of the abdomen. This means that a very small change in viewing angle can produce quite a large change in the appearance of the structures, something that should always be borne in mind. An important difference between the two species is usually in the area posterior to the curved ducts that run parallel to each other in a central position. In *Pocadicnemis pumila*, the ducts extend much further towards the posterior margin of the epigyne, so that there is very little space between them and the hind margin and this space appears as a narrow transverse strip. In *Pocadicnemis juncea*, the ducts do not extend as far posteriorly so that the space behind the curved ducts is distinctly greater and appears more nearly rectangular.

However, the epigyne may also sink into the abdomen, reducing the apparent distance between the epigynal fold and the posterior edge of the sperm ducts (Dobson, 1992). The variability in the epigyne of both species means that when males are not available, it may be difficult to assign isolated specimens to one or the other with absolute certainty.

An additional supporting character can be seen in the sperm ducts which form a pair of loops. In *P. pumila* the width across the anterior pair of loops is typically less than or equal to the width across the posterior pair of loops, whereas in *P. juncea* these are wider anteriorly.

Another guide is provided by the habitat. *Pocadicnemis pumila* can be commonly found in moorland, grassland and bogs in the north and west of Britain but is rather more restricted in its habitats in the south and east. The author (Harvey, 2012) notes that in Essex *P. pumila* is restricted to wet heath in the Epping Forest area and rides in damp boulder clay woodlands in the north-west of the county. In Kent, it is also most frequent on heathland and in ancient woodland, although it has been collected on sand dunes at Sandwich Bay as well. By contrast, *P. juncea* occurs in a broad range of

open habitats throughout its range. These include various grasslands, open woodlands, wetlands (marshes, fens), maritime communities (sand dunes, salt marshes, shingle) as well as many man-modified habitats such as gardens, road verges and post-industrial sites. While the impression is that this species is adapted to a wider range of habitats where it overlaps with *P. pumila*, caution is needed in interpreting the available data due to the possible confusion of the females of the two species.

Identification of *P. pumila* relying only on females from unusual habitats, especially in the south-east or in habitats where *P. juncea* would be expected, should be confirmed by males.

### *Dysdera erythrina* / *D. crocata*

*Dysdera* recorded from synanthropic situations are very unlikely to be *D. erythrina* whereas the usually much larger *D. crocata* is often found in synanthropic situations in gardens, post-industrial situations and various kinds of wasteground, as well as in shingle or stony habitats, especially where subject to disturbance. Reliably identified *D. erythrina* suggest that it is a species much more restricted in habitat preferences, and is most likely to occur on heathland, old undisturbed coastal shingle and old grasslands.

The problem with this species pair lies with females and juveniles (where identification to species should not be attempted) and the unreliability of the leg spines for identification (see Harvey, 2009).

### References

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- Harvey, P (2009) Identification of *Dysdera crocata* and *Dysdera erythrina*. S.R.S. News. No. 63. In *Newsl. Br. arachnol. Soc.* **114**: 17; <http://srs.britishspiders.org.uk/resource/Identification%20of%20Dysdera%20crocata%20and%20erythrina.pdf>
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### Vice county, county and country totals

As described in the March 2012 SRS News No. 72 pp.2-23, the SRS website provides logged-on members with an 'Area Lists' page that provides species totals for vice counties, counties and countries (England, Wales, Scotland). Selecting the vice county, county or country will then generate a species list for that area from the records in the database, with national status and last year recorded.

All the information provided on the SRS website is derived from records provided to the recording scheme and the distribution and autecological information is dynamically generated from the latest data, so is

**Table 1.** Update on numbers of records submitted to the recording scheme for each VC post-atlas

VC	2000-on	2005-on
1	438	146
2	485	139
3	2765	787
4	275	185
5	1367	379
6	527	299
7	2729	266
8	3283	388
9	8156	5340
10	1851	445
11	3287	2009
12	3405	1148
13	2550	1472
14	5570	3088
15	11458	4556
16	5439	2677
17	21488	11664
18	24124	16316
19	5491	2647
20	3885	1714
21	3525	1455
22	4246	1641
23	971	716
24	642	358
25	7493	5252
26	5556	2330
27	5772	5033
28	1867	1702
29	2712	738
30	8130	2274
31	4981	2737
32	1190	230
33	1190	194
34	816	220
35	508	50
36	912	414
37	4868	1578
38	1361	1272
39	685	152
40	3353	2618
41	914	579
42	275	174
43	61	37
44	53	24
45	965	388
46	879	597
47	124	56
48	1091	385
49	2667	839
50	483	140
51	330	221
52	835	589
53	2050	1171
54	3563	1721
55	11949	1369
56	6194	3244

57	3169	891
58	324	184
59	1584	1456
60	8713	5111
61	672	138
62	773	498
63	6196	2810
64	2720	2194
65	760	588
66	91	47
67	60	41
68	36	3
69	4075	2291
70	5079	3102
71	3	3
72	28	9
73	121	27
74	69	4
75	17	17
76	24	7
77	154	129
78	25	16
79	30	19
80	1	1
81	1	0
82	350	312
83	123	27
84	24	1
85	264	59
86	416	248
87	742	729
88	830	477
89	396	239
90	276	208
91	1168	834
92	2119	1719
93	1518	1141
94	193	167
95	4221	2848
96	9810	4436
97	440	250
98	179	100
99	10	10
100	108	103
101	231	220
102	667	494
103	440	399
104	589	313
105	92	26
106	1693	1156
107	5394	4343
108	319	241
109	6455	74
110	38	6
111	1279	1
112	22	9

completely up-to-date with the data provided to the scheme.

Table 1 provides an update on the numbers of records we have received since publication of the provisional atlas by vice county, and once again I would urge Area Organisers from all vice counties to help fill in the gaps.

## ***Rugathodes bellicosus* (Simon, 1873) new to Caithness VC109**

by Dave Holloway

Occasionally I travel to the Thurso area as part of my job and had noticed that I passed near to Achanarras Quarry nature reserve. This small reserve has SSSI status because of its national importance as a site for fish fossils. I sought permission from Scottish Natural Heritage to collect spiders there and am grateful to them that this was granted. Unfortunately work patterns and pressures meant that I was only able to manage one fleeting visit during 2013.

At first glance there a large number of records in the Spider Recording Scheme for Caithness (c25,000). However over 95% of these are due to an extensive trapping program at several sites by Alice Holt Forest Research between April 1997 and November 2001. This means that the majority of the area is severely under recorded and any spider records are very valuable.

So on 14<sup>th</sup> August 2013 I managed my brief trip to Achanarras Quarry. During a rushed visit turning stones I was able to find the expected *Tetrax denticulata* but only one other small species. This looked under a 10x lens as though it might be the small member of the family Theridiidae *Rugathodes bellicosus*. The relatively large white egg sacs carried were distinctive. Recent winter examination of specimens under a microscope revealed that I had indeed collected three adult females of *Rugathodes bellicosus*. I have checked the NBN Gateway and the Spider Recording Scheme. This appears to be the first record of *Rugathodes bellicosus* for Caithness and the most northerly record to date in Britain.

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## **Spiders in Lincolnshire 2010 - 2012**

by Annette Binding

Since my last spider report in 2009 one new species has been added to the Lincolnshire list, while others have been found after a gap of several years or in new locations.

The species new to the county is *Nigma walckenaeri*. A female of this small green dictynid was found and identified by Ian Dawson at Stamford on the 17 October 2011 and was reported in the SRS News. The spider is found on many plants and bushes especially ivy on which it makes its retreat on the curled leaves. Ian Dawson has been studying the dramatic northwards spread of *Nigma walckenaeri* and has found the spider at 111 sites in 11

vice counties. Ian Dawson notes that the species is easy to find in Cambridgeshire and other southern counties but more difficult to locate in Leicestershire and Lincolnshire suggesting that it has only just begun to move into those areas. I have looked at ivy wherever possible but my search so far has merely turned up other dictynid species. However I shall keep looking for it next summer and autumn. The spread of *Nigma walckenaeri* has also been reported in British Wildlife Magazine.

Two interesting spiders were found during our survey of Longholt Wood in 2012. Both were beaten from bushes by Allan on our visit on the 19<sup>th</sup> June. A single male linyphiid *Lepthyphantes obscurus*, was the first Lincolnshire record since 1990, while the crab spider *Philodromus praedatus* (Nb) was the first record for VC53.

Two new sites for *Steatoda grossa* were added to the database. The first one was found by Karen and Sarah Hand in October 2010 at Addlethorpe near Skegness, the sixth county record. In September 2011 Pip Collyer sent me a spider which had been sent to him by Don Holt who found it at Coningsby. I identified the spider as a female *Steatoda grossa*, the seventh county record.

In October I found a new site for *Pholcus phalangoides* when I noticed a single specimen in a clothes shop in Sincil Street, Lincoln.

Colin Smith collected a female *Lepthyphantes minutus* at Crowle Moor NNR on the 17<sup>th</sup> May 2010, another new site record. This species was last found in Lincolnshire at Moor Farm LWT Reserve in April 2005. Despite its name this spider is one of the larger linyphiids.

Also a new site record, I found a single female *Micaria pulicaria* on the 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2012 in my garden. This was the first record since 2008.

Among the spiders collected by Colin Smith in 2009 and not mentioned in the 2009 report in Transactions were a number of new site records. These new site records include a male *Clubiona subtilis* from Hibaldstow collected on the 6<sup>th</sup> January. Colin's visit to Kirkby Moor LWT Reserve on the 16<sup>th</sup> January produced four new site records, a female *Crustulina guttata*, a female *Ostearius melanopygius*, two female *Ero cambridgei* and a male and female *Ceratinella brevipes*. This was the 9<sup>th</sup> county record of *Ceratinella brevipes*. All the spiders except the male *Ceratinella brevipes* were beaten from gorse. The male *Ceratinella brevipes* was collected from a grass tussock. Kirkby Moor is a well worked site. Prior to Colin's visit the total number of species recorded from the reserve was 102 including two (Na) and five (Nb) species. Colin's four new site records brings the total up to 106 and illustrates how much more there is still to be found in Lincolnshire.

Colin also collected two species which had very few previous Lincolnshire records. Both were found in moss. The first of these was a male *Dicymbium brevisetosum* from Usselby Plantation on the 30<sup>th</sup> January. This was only the fourth county record for this species. On the 18<sup>th</sup> February Colin collected a female *Crustulina sticta* (Nb) at Donna Nook. There are only eight previous records of this species which is nationally scarce.

Finally on the 1<sup>st</sup> of October 2011 a female *Nuctenea umbratica* came to a sugar trap on a pine tree at Messingham Sand Quarry LWT Reserve. The sugar trap was put out by John Davison to attract moths. I don't know if the spider was attracted to the sugar or to the

moths caught there. As far as I am aware this is the first time a spider has been found on a sugar trap in Lincolnshire.

My thanks to all the people who have sent me records and specimens during the past four years.

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- Oxford, G. 2012. Spider Report. *British Wildlife* **23** (6) August: 438-439.
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## Pseudoscorpions in Lincolnshire 2009 - 2012

by Annette Binding

Since my last report in Transactions on pseudoscorpions in 2008, I have received two specimens and four records from Lincolnshire Naturalists Union members. I have also added a number of old records found in old publications such as 'The Naturalist' and 'Lincolnshire Naturalists Union Transactions' and other records have come in via the National Recording Scheme.

The first specimen received was from Alan Phillips, found at Laughton Forest on 16<sup>th</sup> August 2009. I identified it as *Lamprochernes savignyi*. There is only one previous Lincolnshire record of this species from Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe in August 1987 found by John Bratton and G. Weaver.

The second specimen was sent to me by Charlie Barnes who found it in his house on the 6<sup>th</sup> April 2011. I identified it as *Cheiridium museorum*, a very tiny species approximately 1.5mm long. It is also known as the book scorpion. It is found indoors and in the nests of birds living close to man such as house sparrows, pigeons and house martins. This is the 6th Lincolnshire record of *Cheiridium museorum*. It has not been recorded in the county since 1977 when one was found in a house in Londonthorpe near Grantham by L. Lucas on the 17th June. That specimen was put into the Merseyside Museum Collection. Three of the five earlier records of *Cheiridium museorum* were added to the database in 2012 as a result of our research.

All the other records received in 2011 and 2012 came from Silvia Fowler who found *Lamprochernes nodosus* in her compost bin in the same place in both years and in good numbers. *Lamprochernes nodosus* is widely distributed in Great Britain, found in compost and dung heaps and recorded from eight locations in Lincolnshire. It was last recorded in Lincolnshire at Grantham in 2007.

Together with the records already mentioned and records discovered as part of our research, we now have 113 records on the Lincolnshire database dating from 1877 to 2012.

### Reference

- Binding, A.E. 2009 Pseudoscorpions *Transactions* Vol. 27 Part 2. Lincolnshire Naturalists' Union.

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## Lincolnshire Harvestmen in 2012

by Annette Binding

There was one species new to the county in 2012, *Opilio canestrinii*. Several of these were found in my own tiny back garden in late summer. The first one was found on the 22nd August and the last one on the 14<sup>th</sup> September. The males of *Opilio canestrinii* are easily identified by the dark brown legs contrasting with the orange coloured body and trochanters.

*Dicranopalpus ramosus*, first reported in the county in 2011, turned up at three new locations in 2012. All were found in August. Charlie Barnes found the species at Whisby Nature Park on the 5th August, I found one at Longholt Wood on the 8th August and Karen and Sarah Hand found it at Chambers Farm Wood Centre also on the 8th August. It appears that *Dicranopalpus ramosus* has been in the county for longer than first thought. In 2012 I received four records from previous years, two from 2011 and two from 2009. Alan Lazenby reported *Dicranopalpus ramosus* at Blankney Fen on 15th September 2011 and Charlie Barnes found it at Banovallum House, Horncastle on the 2nd December 2011. Alan Lazenby found the first of the 2009 specimens at Blankney Fen on the 16th August and Karen and Sarah Hand reported finding 'dozens' of them under a bridge at Addlethorpe on the 19th August. These are the earliest records of *Dicranopalpus ramosus* that I am aware of. Altogether seven species of harvestmen were recorded in 2012.

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## The Whatmough Collection of Spiders

by Annette and Allan Binding

In 2012 we received a grant from the Lincolnshire Biodiversity Partnership to cover the cost involved in researching the Whatmough Collection of Spiders. A random sample of the tubes in the collection, the reports in Transactions and the record cards had shown that much of the data from these sources was not on the spider database.

George W. Whatmough became Lincolnshire County Recorder for Spiders in 1948 and wrote reports in the Lincolnshire Naturalists Union Transactions between 1950 and 1970. Although he continued to record spiders up to the 1980's, he wrote no further reports.

We began our research with the record cards as much of the work had already been done on them and this formed the basis of the information from the collection. Every card was checked and any missing data were added to the database.

Next every record from the Transactions was written on to recording forms. There were a total of 413 records and new information was added to the database from the majority of them.

Finally all the specimens in the tubes were listed onto the recording forms and this data was also put onto the database. There were approximately 985 tubes. These included 77 specimens from foreign countries. Of the remaining 900 or so, 374 were not on the spider database. This number was made up of 193 from Lincolnshire, 136 from other counties in Great Britain and 45 from the Channel Islands. Just over 530 were already on the database but new information such as the number or sex of the specimens or names of collector and determiner were added to about 75% of them. When the input of data was complete it was possible to extract information about and from the collection. We discovered that the oldest specimen in the collection was a female *Zygiella x-notata* from Mablethorpe dated December 1947 and although there were a few specimens up to the mid-1980's, the majority of the specimens were from the 28 year period from 1951 to 1979.

Among the specimens there were seventeen species which are nationally rare. There were six from other counties in Great Britain, five from the Channel Islands and six from Lincolnshire.

The only Red Data Book 1 (RDB1) specimen, *Gibbaranea bituberculata*, was collected from Jersey in the Channel Islands in 1969 and was identified by G. H. Locket. The only other Red Data Book (RDB) specimen was *Zora armillata* which is RDB3. It was collected in July 1951 at Wicken Fen in Cambridgeshire by Mr E.C. Riggall and was also identified by G. H. Locket.

There were four Nationally Notable a (Na) specimens, one from Lincolnshire and three from other counties. The specimen from Lincolnshire, *Hygrolycosa rubrofasciata*, was collected at Linwood Warren in December 1970 by F. R. Pearce and identified by G. H. Locket. It was not reported in Transactions. The three from other counties were *Marpissa radiata* from Wicken Fen collected by Mr E. C. Riggall in 1951, *Maso gallicus* collected from Folkstone Warren in Kent and *Argiope bruennichi* collected from Studland, Dorset in 1962. All were determined by G. W. Whatmough.

The eleven Nationally Notable b (Nb) specimens included five from Lincolnshire, two from other counties and four from the Channel Islands. The five Notable b (Nb) species from Lincolnshire were all collected from Gibraltar Point and include *Philodromus fallax* April 1949, *Marpissa nivoyi* May 1951, *Crustulina sticta* July 1968, *Baryphyma maritimum* May 1966, June 1967, July 1967, May 1970 and *Argenna patula* May 1973. The two species from other counties were *Episinus truncatus* from Babbacombe in Devon 1950 and *Pardosa trauilli* from Ben Eighe in Scotland, no date given. The four

species from the Channel Islands included two specimens of *Crustulina sticta*, one from Alderney 1970 and one from Jersey in 1971, *Hybocoptus decollatus* from Jersey in 1990 and *Trachyzelotes pedestris* also from Jersey in 1966.

The small collection of foreign species was very interesting and included specimens collected by Whatmough on his travels as well as specimens collected by holidaying Lincolnshire Naturalists Union Members. Some of the specimens collected in European countries can also be found in Great Britain. The truly foreign species included specimens that had been accidentally introduced to Great Britain with products, often with bananas. These accidentally introduced species included *Loxosceles rufescens* from Kenya, a very poisonous spider also known as the recluse spider or fiddleback spider. There were several specimens from the family Sparassidae. These included two specimens of the brown huntsman *Heteropoda venatoria* from the West Indies, one *Olios sancti-vincenti* also from the West Indies and two *Torania variata* from British Cameroons. All these are large spiders and the specimens are all females. There was also a single specimen of *Phoneutria fera* also called the Brazilian wandering spider which belongs to the family Ctenidae. Whatmough's specimen, a female, came into the country in June 1951. There are eight known species of *Phoneutria* (Greek for murderess) but *Phoneutria fera* is the most poisonous and is often referred to as being the most dangerous spider in the world. It has a body length of up to 2 inches with a leg span of 6 inches. *Phoneutria* are aggressive, fast moving and bite readily. Other poisonous spiders in Whatmough's collection included 3 specimens of the Australian red-back, a relative of the Black widow spider. There was also a Black widow from Iran although how these specimens came into Whatmough's collection is not stated.

Among the other interesting species in the collection were three specimens of *Gasteracantha* which have spines on their abdomens and are often prettily coloured and marked and three specimens of wasp spider *Argiope* sp., two from New South Wales, Australia and one from Honolulu in Hawaii.

Whatmough's collection of spiders is held in rubber topped glass tubes and over time some of these had perished so as well as extracting the data, specimens in affected tubes, approximately fifty, were re-housed. Despite the fact that some of the specimens are up to sixty years old the collection is presently in very good condition although like other invertebrate collections, it will need checking occasionally.

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