

Taxon Report

for

the spider

Argiope bruennichi



Website: <http://srs.britishspiders.org.uk>. Email: srs@britishspiders.org.uk

Name: Argiope bruennichi

Authority: (Scopoli, 1772)

Order: Arachnida: Araneae

Family: Araneidae

Records: 1580

First Record: 1900

Latest Record: 2017

1992-on hectads: 263

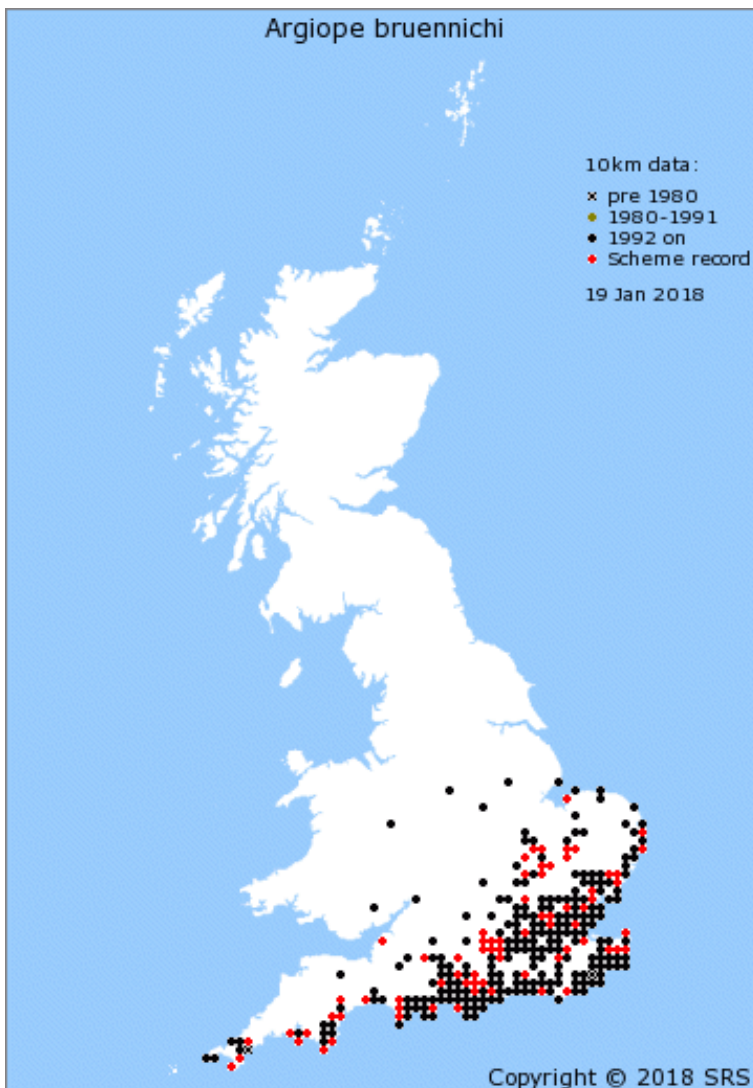
Pre-1992 hectads: 27

Total hectads: 265

Identification difficulty: 2

Can be identified in the field with care and experience. Needs a good view or examination with a good quality lens. Beginners should take voucher specimens until they gain familiarity and experience. May be identifiable from a good photo. Records acceptable from competent recorders.

ID notes: The adult female should not be difficult to identify but the male is confusable with other small spider species



About this species

Recorded altitude range

0m to 200m

Distribution

The spider was first recorded in Britain in 1922 at Rye, East Sussex (Locket & Millidge 1951) and for many years seemed to be restricted to a few areas close to the south coast in Sussex, Kent, Hampshire and Dorset. Since the 1970s the spider has increased its range, spreading inland from a number of its coastal locations. The spider is well established in Dorset (Merrett 1979) and records from as far back as 1965 in East Cornwall have come to light (Smithers 1992). A record from Derbyshire (Dobson 1996) was assumed to be an accidental import, but in 1997 the spider turned up both in the very south and north of Essex (Ruffell 1997). There were then records from Surrey (Baldock 1998), Wiltshire (M. Askins, pers. comm.) and the spider is widespread in the East Thames Corridor (Harvey 2000). Remarkably, P. Harvey has been given details of a sighting near Bexley, north Kent in 1965 confirmed by a photograph. There is a strong implication that the populations in the West Country and north Kent originate from nuclei dating at least this far back. Harvey (1999; 2000) and Smithers (2000) have provided distribution maps showing the spread of the spider. It is widespread in western Europe (Merrett 1990).

Habitat and ecology

The spider has a very striking appearance with black and yellow horizontal bands on its abdomen. It spins a large orb web with a stabilimentum and favours areas of coastal chalk grassland, open rough grassland, wasteland and roadside verges. P. Harvey (pers. comm.) has seen depauperate juvenile spiders in a wheat field, but these individuals were unlikely to survive to mate or produce egg-sacs. In northern France the author has recorded *Argiope bruennichi* in large numbers in unmanaged damp grassland. The large orb webs are slung low down in the vegetation and the adult spider is easily hidden by the surrounding herbage. Grasshoppers form the main food item. The large urn shaped egg cocoon is positioned in the higher levels of vegetation and the eggs over-winter, hatching out in the following spring. Both sexes mature in the late summer, the females perhaps living on until October but the much smaller males living for only a short time.

Status

There has been a substantial increase in sightings of the spider during the period from 1990. At sites where *A. bruennichi* is present, individuals can number into the thousands (P. Smithers, pers. comm.).

Threats

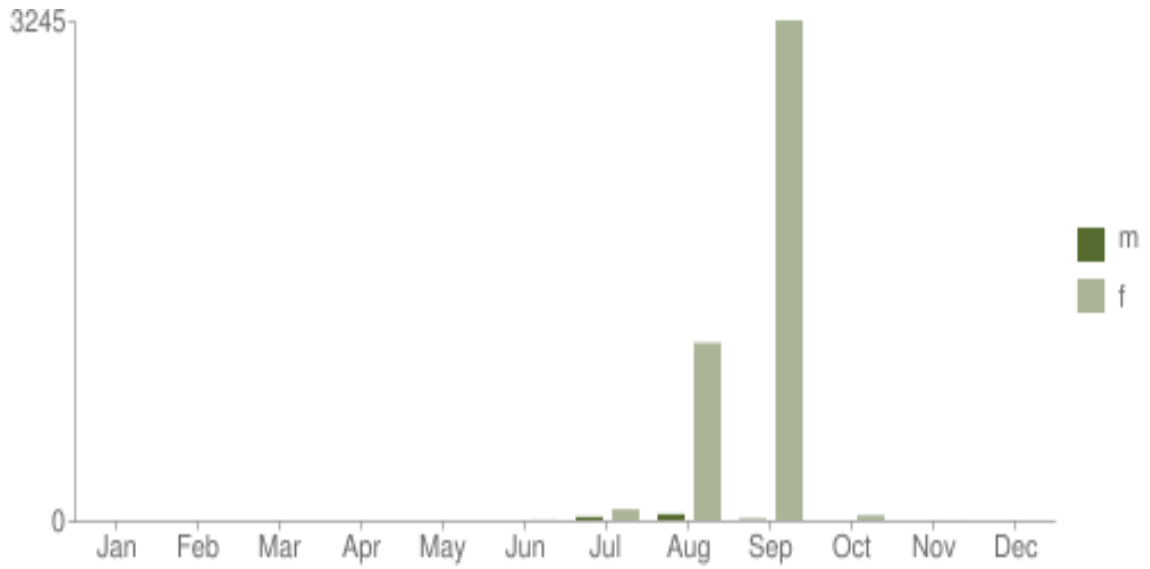
Text based on:

Original author of profile: E.L. Bee. Text based on Harvey, P.R., Nellist, D.R. & Telfer, M.G.

(eds) 2002. Provisional atlas of British spiders (Arachnida, Araneae), Volumes 1 & 2. Huntingdon: Biological Records Centre.

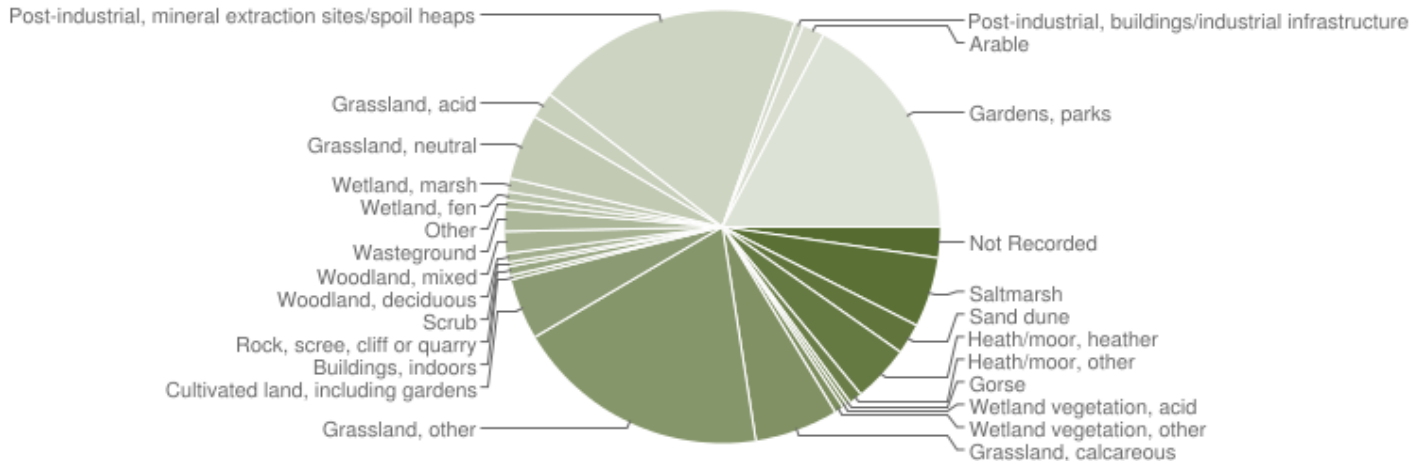
Adult season

Adult Season Data (based on 682 records with adult season information)

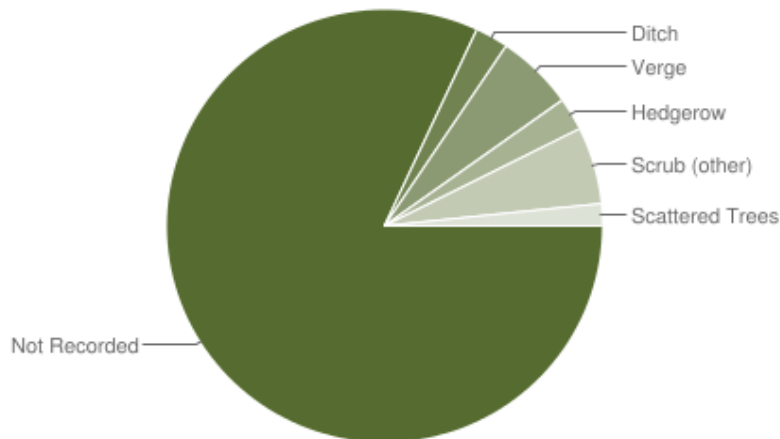


Habitats

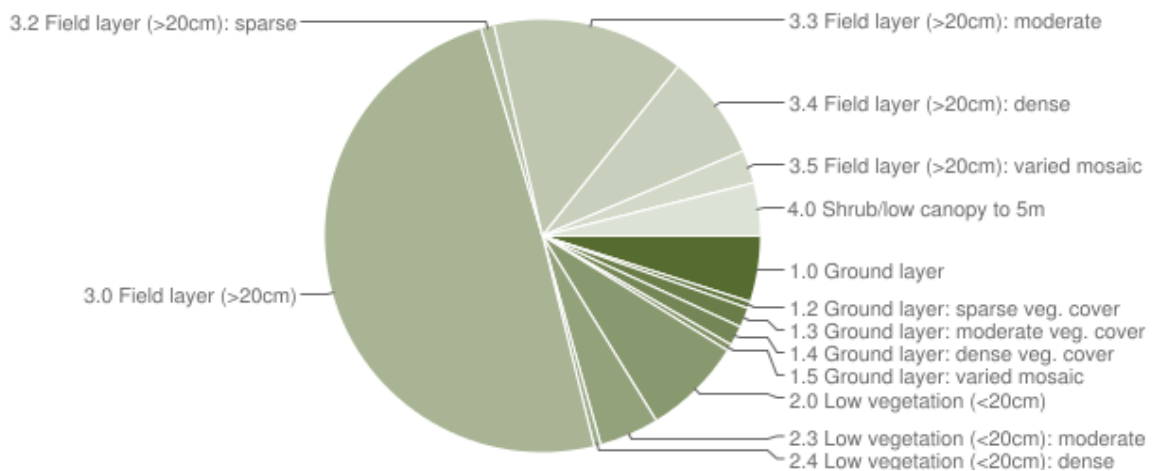
Recorded broad habitats, based on 306 habitat records



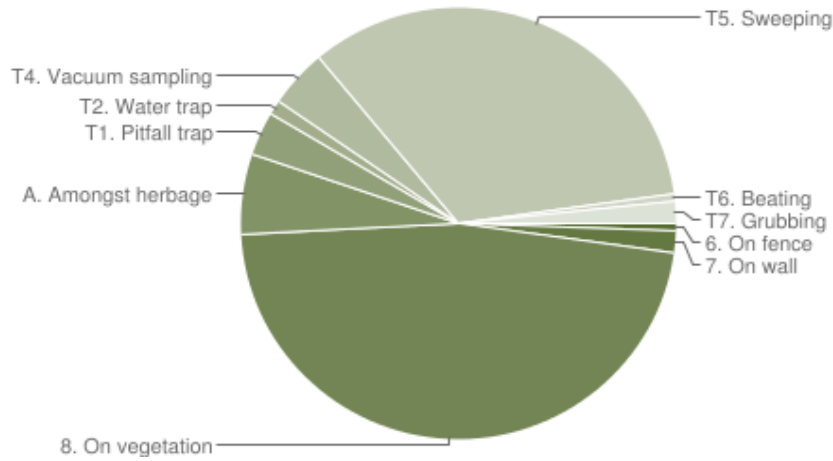
Recorded subhabitats, based on 22 subhabitat records



Recorded structural habitats, based on 228 structural habitat records

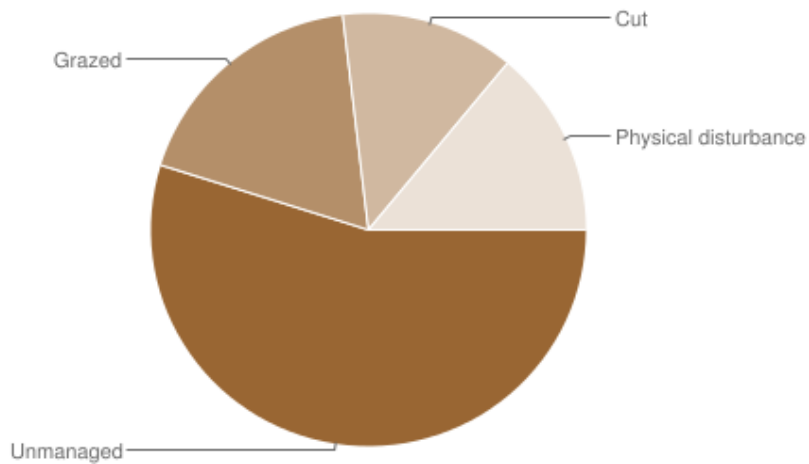


Habitat Detail and Method, based on 183 habitat detail and method records

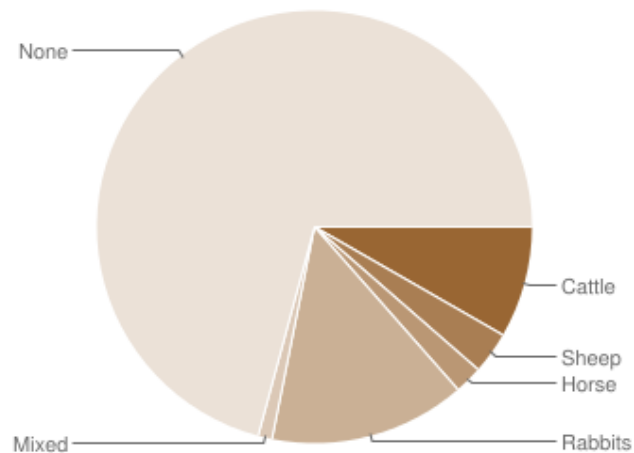


Recorded management in place

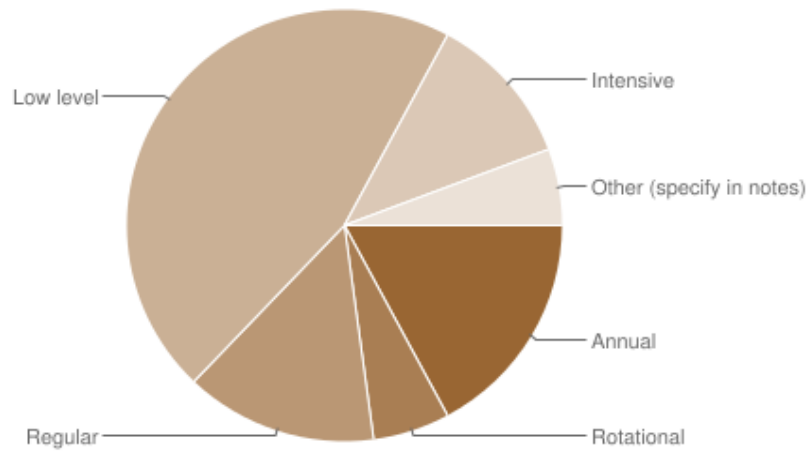
Management Data based on 93 management data records



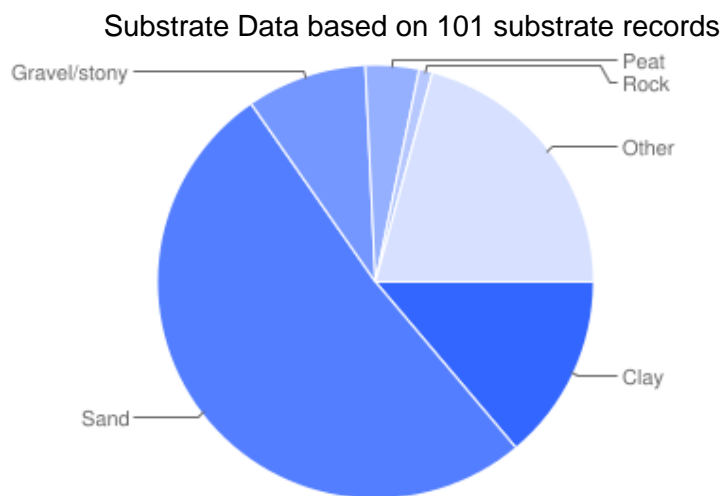
Grazing Management Data based on 96 grazing records



Management frequency Data based on 35 management frequency records



Substrate and Hydrology



Hydrology Data based on 103 hydrology records

