Spider Recording Scheme News Summer 2014, No. 79

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My thanks to those who have contributed to this issue. S.R.S. News No. 80 will be published in Autumn 2014. 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.freeserve.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.

An urgent risk of the website being taken down without warning in April meant that emergency action had to be taken to move the Spider and Harvestman Recording Scheme website to a new server. This temporarily meant the website address changed, although the old url was automatically redirected to the new website. The old url has now been re-instated. Hopefully the changes have all been seamless and the status of the website is now secure.

Another probable *Zoropsis spinimana* record has resulted from a photograph of a large spider taken in May this year from an outhouse in Brighton, adding to the evidence that this species is now increasingly well established in the London area and the south-east.

Some other remarkable records have been coming to light. In May this year I was sent some spiders for identification by Simon Warmingham, and these include a species and family new to Britain, in the form of a tiny mysmenid spider which appears to be *Trogloneta granulum*, from under stones in woodland near the coast in S. Wales, collected on 23/3/2012. Peter Merrett agrees the identification seems entirely reasonable, but we await absolute confirmation of the spider's identity by someone familiar with this species. I mentioned the news in an email to BAS Council, and Richard Gallon realised a tiny unidentified spider he collected in North Wales in a slate waste heap on 15 October 2012 was the same species - so we have a new family and spider from both South and North Wales! Richard has posted pictures of his spider on the SRS website at http://srs.britishspiders.org.uk/portal/p/Picture/r/view/s/Trogloneta+granulum+epigyne and http://srs.britishspiders.org.uk/portal/p/Picture/r/view/s/Trogloneta+granulum. According to the spiders of Europe website www.araneae.unibe.ch/data/533/Trogloneta_granulum the spider occurs in the litter layer of subalpine beech forests, in blocky debris, at 700-1000m, so if our spider is *Trogloneta granulum*, it doesn't look as though the Wales records are following the literature in terms of altitudes.

In June Allan Neilson posted two photos of a spider http://srs.britishspiders.org.uk/portal/p/Picture/r/view/s/Unknown+small+spider on the website forum, taken beside a footpath near Weymouth on 28 May. Apparently someone had suggested to him that it might be *Hypsosinga sanguinea*, which I thought was certainly not the case. Initially I thought it would turn out to be a juvenile *Araniella*, which are often reddish and can have variable spotting, but the more I looked at the images, the more I thought it must be *Hypsosinga heri*, not recorded in Britain since 1912 and which has been considered extinct in Britain. Rob Cumming went to look in the Weymouth area at the end of June during a week after torrential rainstorms without having any success, but Rowley Snazell went in the first week of July and with the help of his wife Elaine managed to find one spider, which has been confirmed by Rowley and Peter Merrett as *Hypsosinga heri*. Looking at the Ordnance Survey maps shows there is potential landscape scale wetland habitat available at Radipole Lake and Lodmoor to the east, so the likelihood is that there may be an established population present in the area which has remained undetected for a long time. As both these sites are RSPB reserves no one should collect there without specific permission.

Although only a small proportion of British spiders can be reliably identified to species without microscopical examination of adults, the photographs originally posted by Allan demonstrate how this can result in important discoveries, albeit often also with a frustrating lack of the evidence needed.

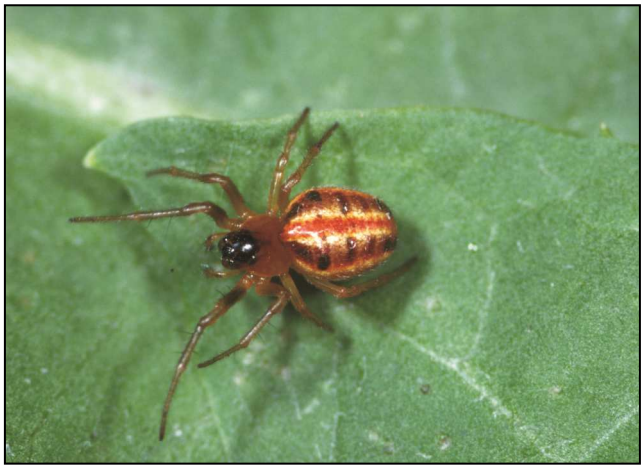

Figure 1. *Hypsosinga heri* female from Pointe de Penvins, Brittany in 1992. Photograph © Peter Harvey

Area Organiser changes

Rob Cumming has resigned as Area Organiser for Dorset. Rob points out that the next AO will need to go out to local naturalists and offer support for them to specialise in spiders. The SRS and myself are very grateful indeed for all the work Rob has put in over the years as AO for the county, and I ask that anyone prepared to take over gets in contact with myself as soon as possible.

Notable Spiders Recorded in Yorkshire in 2013

by Richard Wilson

The following brief report lists those species recorded by myself in Watsonian Yorkshire during 2013 which are considered to be noteworthy, owing to the lack of records in recent times. Almost all the survey work was undertaken in upland habitats (mires, peatbogs and acid grassland) within the Yorkshire Dales and North York Moors National Parks. These surveys were focused on habitats and locations with historical records of some of our rarest species (i.e. UK Priority species/ species of principal importance). Surveys were completed during three separate periods (January to April; August to October; and November to December 2013). Separate reports will be published in due course describing these surveys in more detail.

A total of 114 species were recorded by me in the three Yorkshire's vice-counties (VC) (62, 64 and 65) covered by these surveys. Of these, 13 species are considered noteworthy and are described in more detail in the table overleaf.

The majority of the noteworthy species have not been recorded in Yorkshire for several decades, some upwards of 30 years. This may reflect a lack of recording effort in these upland habitats, especially during the winter months. Having said this, the mires and peat bogs associated with Malham Tarn National Nature Reserve have been visited by many arachnologists (e.g. Eric Duffey) and have failed to regularly record these species so they may well be genuinely rare or at least present at very low densities.

I'd like to thank Peter Harvey for confirming / verifying some specimens and Dr Sarah Henshall (Buglife) for assisting with some of the field surveys in the Yorkshire Dales. Thanks also to Ian Court (Yorkshire Dales NP Authority Ecologist) and Rona Charles (North York Moors NP Authority Ecologist) for arranging site access as well as providing some funding. Additional funding was received from Natural England via Buglife and a small grant was received from the BAS Ted Locket Fund for the survey work undertaken in the North York Moors NP. A separate, more detailed report will be submitted in response to this latter award.

Figure 1. Looking west towards Wharfedale, Starbotton Fell, Yorkshire Dales NP. Photograph © Richard Wilson

Family	Species	Site and VC	Status in Yorkshire	General comments
Linyphiidae	*Ceratinella scabrosa*	Great Shunner Fell (VC 65)	First record for VC 65 and only the 9th record for Yorkshire. Most records are recent (post 1990)	A species of southern Britain, Yorkshire is at the northern edge of its range where it is frequent (historically). However, in recent times, records have become less frequent but no obvious decline.
	Walckenaeria alticeps	Tarn Moss, Malham (VC 64)	First Watsonian Yorkshire record.	This is probably a northern species in Europe though only separated from *W. antica* in 1952. It is associated with *Sphagnum* mires and bogs, shaded by taller vegetation (e.g. purple moor-grass, bog myrtle *Myrica gale* or birch *Betula* sp.). It would appear to be rarely recorded.
	Walckenaeria nodosa	Tarn Moss, Malham (VC 64)	Only the fifth record in Yorkshire since the early 1980s.	Widespread though uncommon in Britain and reportedly declining; though not included within the UK's priority list. Most recent records largely confined to Wales and Scotland. It is recorded in wetland habitats amongst moss within a wide range of habitats including woodlands, heathland and marshes. Appears to be autumn and winter active.
	Pelecopsis parallela	Pen-y-Ghent (VC 64)	Only the 2nd record for VC 64 (last in July 1961) and 6th record for Watsonian Yorkshire.	Widespread but scattered south of the Humber, rarely recorded inland to the north. Occurs in a variety of habitats including moss, detritus in woods, under stones and, especially, in calcareous and acid grasslands.
	Scotinotylus evansi	Ingleborough and Rylton Fell (VC 64)	First records in VC 64 since 1985.	Another species associated with high ground, restricted to northern England and Scotland but absent in Wales. It is associated with grassland and heather, possibly amongst stones and other refugia. This may be a species that is under recorded owing to its cryptic lifestyle.
	Latithorax faustus	Ingleborough and Rylton Fell (VC 64)	First records in Watsonian Yorkshire since 1990 and 1984 for VC 64.	An upland species of open habitats such as grassland and mire. Lack of modern records in Yorkshire has restricted our understanding of the species' ecology as it may be under recorded.
	Semljicola caliginosus	Bull Bogs, Buttertubs Pass and Great Shunner Fell (VC 65)	Apart from one record in October 2003, no previous records for 30 years.	**Nationally Notable b (Nb) & UK Priority species**. A species associated with dense *Sphagnum* seepage lines within wet mire vegetation.
	Leptothrix hardyi	Egton Moor (VC 62)	A rare species with only 17 previous records; three of which have been in the last 20 years.	Generally recorded in heathland during the winter months. Old records in southern England. Most modern records in west Wales and northern Scotland.
	Hilaira nubigena	Buckden Pike (VC 65)	First record for 33 years and only the 14th record since 1900.	**Nationally Notable a (Na)**. A species of wet areas, usually in association with *Sphagnum* or *Juncus* sp., on moorland, mostly at altitudes between about 400 and 700 m. Adults are found in August and September, and probably over winter.
	Hilaira pervicax	Ingleborough and Tarn Moss, Malham (VC 64) and Whernside (VC 65)	Only three records in Watsonian Yorkshire in last 30 years. First records from VC 65 since the mid-1980s	**Nationally Notable (b)**. This is a species of wet places on high ground, associated with *Sphagnum* and other wetland vegetation. Consequently, it is restricted to the northern Pennines in England with most records in the Highlands of Scotland and an outlying population in Snowdonia, north Wales.
	Centromerus arcanus	Buckden Pike (VC 65)	First record for VC 65 and first anywhere in Watsonian Yorkshire for more than 30 years.	A species of north-western Britain, much of Wales and high ground in the south. A species of uplands, occurring in bogs and woodlands amongst moss.

Family	Species	Site and VC	Status in Yorkshire	General comments
	Oryphantes angulatus	Rylton Fell (VC 64)	Only the sixth record in twenty years.	A species associated with the northern Pennines of England and the higher areas of Scotland and northern Wales. However, it doesn't appear to be restricted to a particular habitat within these upland areas. The lack of Yorkshire records is probably a genuine reflection of under recording.
Araneidae	*Hypsosinga albovittata*	Moorsholm Moor (VC 62)	Only seven previous records in Watsonian Yorkshire from Strensall or Skipwith Commons. New record for North York Moors NP.	A small orb-web spider associated with heathland which has a scattered distribution in the UK. Note that this was an immature specimen.

Figure 2. Transect of pitfall traps (marked by red flags), Egton Moor, North York Moors NP. **Inset**. Pitfall trap in *Sphagnum* seepage line, Bull Bogs, Buttertubs Pass, Yorkshire Dales NP. Photographs © Richard Wilson

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Water Spiders apparently sunbathing

by Ian K Dawson

By the very nature of their subaquatic environment, observations are seldom made of free-living water spiders *Argyroneta aquatica*. It may be of interest, therefore, that on three separate occasions in the summer of 2013 I saw males hauled out on the leaves of water soldier *Stratiotes aloides* apparently sunning themselves. Earlier in the spring I had discovered a breeding population of the Norfolk Hawker dragonfly *Aeshna isosceles* at Hayling Lake, Paxton Pits, Cambridgeshire. This BAP dragonfly was last seen in the Cambridgeshire Fens in 1897, since when it has been restricted to the Broads and grazing marshes of east Norfolk and latterly east Suffolk. I therefore made frequent visits to the lake to monitor the dragonflies.

I noted water spiders sitting conspicuously on the water soldier, well above the water in mid-afternoon on 19th June, just after midday on 20th June, and again on 15th July at around 0945. On the last occasion I had my telescope with me and managed to take some record 'digiscoped' shots, one of which accompanies this note; despite its limitations it clearly shows the spider to be an adult male. Indeed on all three occasions the spiders were adult males, remaining motionless on their exposed perch for several minutes before descending again below the surface.

The area of emergent water soldier on Hayling Lake, where it was introduced more than twenty years ago, is very extensive – perhaps half a hectare – and the three spiders were in different spots so clearly different individuals. The fact that I came across this behaviour on three separate occasions suggests that it must be regular.

According to Bristowe's *The World of Spiders* (1958) "the only occasions on which they voluntarily leave the water are at [an] early stage in their lives [when "they float away into the air on threads"] and when they moult, or catch prey before they have built an established home, or when their bodies have got wet and need drying. In nature it is not uncommon for elderly males to air the damp patches which develop on the upper surface of their bodies."

All three days were warm and sunny. In particular, the morning of 15th July was very warm and the spider had its back turned towards the sun. There was no sign of any prey, nor moulted skin, so it would appear that the spider was simply soaking up the sun's warmth.

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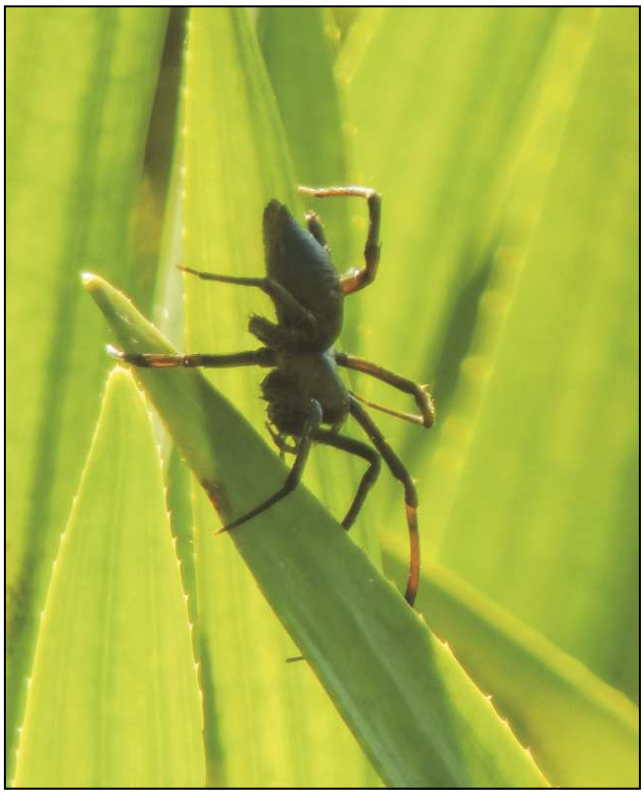

Figure 1. Water spider *Argyroneta aquatica* apparently sunbathing. Photograph © Ian Dawson

Peter Merrett comments that he has occasionally caught adult or near-adult water spiders in pitfall traps on heathland close to bogs.