

Spider Recording Scheme News

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

CUK: fah



Editorial

by Richard Gallon

The BAS SRS/HRS bespoke iRecord data entry form will soon be available for use. This new form is currently undergoing additional testing, so please look out for news of its imminent release on the BAS social media platforms. It will allow users to enter their records with photographs and the all-important ecological data.

Winter is a good time to catch up with your record backlog. Please use these dark evenings to digitise your records and send them in to the SRS (either by MapMate synch file or Excel spreadsheet). I've heard on social media of some really important spider finds this year. These records are extremely important for conservation work, but sadly if they only exist on social media they don't count towards this effort – please send them in to the SRS so they get used for future conservation status reviews and academic research.

New *Maro lepidus* Records From England and Wales

by Richard Gallon

Maro lepidus is a small pale Money Spider (Fig. 1). It is Nationally Rare and listed as Endangered. Over the last few years I have found it at several locations in Wales and England. Previously in Wales (Migneint), I would find this species by sieving or vacuuming *Sphagnum/Juncus* flushing gullies on blanket bog at an altitude of about 450 m. However, in 2022 I vacuumed it from Cors Fochno, a lowland raised bog at an altitude of only 4 m. Here the spider was found by vacuuming *Sphagnum*-fringed old wet peat-cuttings.

At this year's BAS field weekend I found an adult female *M. lepidus* at Kielder Mires by vacuuming *Sphagnum*-fringed blanket bog pools (Fig. 2). This find represents a new vice-county record for South Northumberland (VC67). At Cors Geuallt and Cors Bryn Engen it was also vacuumed from *Sphagnum*-fringed pools. The species clearly favours habitats with *Sphagnum* closely associated with clean acidic water in bogs/mires.



Figure 2. *Maro lepidus* habitat. *Sphagnum*-fringed blanket bog pool at Kielder Mires. © Richard Gallon.

Location	Grid Reference	Date	Quantity
Cors Caron, North-east Bog	SN69036338	15/09/2021	2M 1F
Cors Fochno	SN63989088	29/10/2022	1M
Cors Fochno	SN63909108	29/10/2022	1M
Cors Geuallt	SH73285850	10/02/2023	1M
Migneint	SH75484460	18/03/2023	5F
Migneint	SH75734407	18/03/2023	1M
Migneint	SH75824401	18/03/2023	1F
Migneint	SH75954398	18/03/2023	1F
Migneint	SH76784525	25/03/2023	2F
Kielder Mires, Currick	NY61068252	24/06/2023	1F
Cors Bryn Engen	SH72255756	15/10/2023	4M 2F

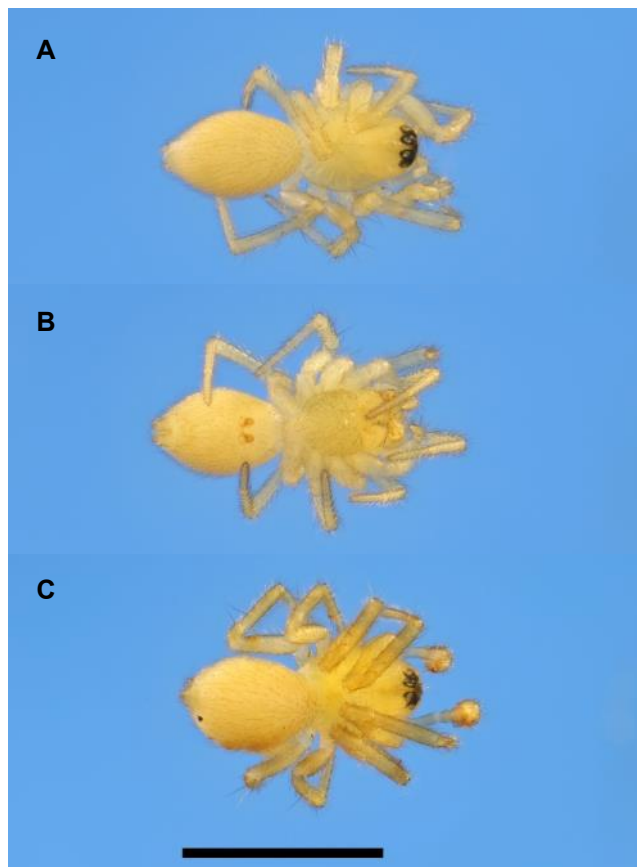


Figure 1. *Maro lepidus* Cors Caron: female dorsal (A), ventral (B); male dorsal (C). Scale 1 mm. © Richard Gallon.

New Spiders to Cornwall, VCs 1 & 2, for the Spider Recording Scheme in 2022

by Tylan Berry

Maro lepidus – Surprisingly large numbers of individuals were found amongst saturated *Sphagnum* and floating sedges in a soakaway at Roughtor Marsh on Bodmin Moor in January (J. McGill). Intensive searches at other mire systems on the moor have completely failed to locate any further specimens despite the prevalence of, what would seem, ideal habitat for the spider. It is odd that the spider occurs at a high density at the site at Roughtor, but then appears absent elsewhere.

Ozyptila claveata – A single male was collected by vacuum sampling grassy undercliffs at Penlee Point in January, and then again at the same site in May.



Figure 1. *Ozyptila claveata* adult male. © Tylan Berry.

Wiehlea calcarifera – This was discovered by pitfall trapping; a single male was caught in March in an area of dry heath/acid grassland at the Red Moor Nature Reserve. Much effort has been expended in trying to locate further specimens, including vacuum sampling by night, but all attempts have failed to reproduce the find.



Figure 2. *Trematocephalus cristatus* adult female. © Tylan Berry.

Pirata tenuitarsis – A male and female were taken at Lowerton Moor at an area of wet heath/mire dominated by very wet *Sphagnum*. It is surprising that it doesn't seem to occur at other similar locations within the Mid-Cornwall Moors, or on Bodmin Moor, as there is ample habitat.

Drassyllus praeficus – A male and female were found running across the rocky wave cut platform at Cadythrew Rock, near Vault Beach, in May. Further specimens were found at a similar situation at a site near Rame Head a week later.

Trematocephalus cristatus – It was only a matter of time until this species made its way to Cornwall! A lone male was spotted sat underneath an umbellifer, taking shelter from a heavy downpour at Luckett Wood in June. It is highly likely that the species is present at other sites in east Cornwall.

Philodromus margaritatus – A single immature specimen was spotted on a felled Ash at Lanhydrock Estate in December 2020 (A. Cruise). Despite many visits to the site to locate further specimens, nothing came to light until October 2022 when an immature female was spotted on a lichen covered Hawthorn branch (N. Bacciu) at the same site. This sighting led to survey effort targeting horizontal branches of lichen covered trees by beating; a method that proved very successful and produced a handful of specimens on the day. The species may well occur at other large parkland sites across the county, including the nearby Boconnoc Estate.



Figure 3. *Philodromus margaritatus* male. © Tylan Berry.

Dicymbium nigrum brevisetosum – A male of this species was collected by beating a Hazel at Lanhydrock Estate whilst searching for *Philodromus margaritatus* in August.

Hahnia pusilla – A female was found by sieving moss and broadleaf litter under tree cover at the edge of a pool at Goss Moor in December. It is interesting that this has never been discovered here previously as the Goss Moor NNR has been well surveyed in the past. It is a large site however, and the spider possibly occurs in small pockets across the reserve.

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***Mangora acalypha* in VC55**

by Alan Cann

Mangora acalypha is quite common in the south of England but it was first recorded in VC55 (Leicestershire & Rutland) in a garden just outside Leicester in 2021 (Fig. 1). In 2022 it was recorded on Gorse at a second site just a few miles away from the first site. However the 2023 season (to date – August) has seen a remarkable spread with this relatively distinctive spider being recorded on shrubs and grassland in all corners of the vice-county (11 records from 9 sites) (Fig. 2). It seems that *Mangora acalypha* has joined the legions of species currently undergoing a north-westerly range expansion.



Figure 1. *Mangora acalypha*, female specimen.
© Alan Cann.



Figure 2. VC55 distribution of *Mangora acalypha*.
Original recorded location indicated by arrow. © Alan Cann.

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***Badumna longinqua* (L. Koch, 1867) an Australian Spider Established Outside in Britain**

by Richard Gallon

Garden Centres have become popular places for recorders to visit. Previously they were the go-to place to find *Uloborus plumipes* and *Parasteatoda tepidariorum*, but diligent recorders are now observing a growing number of non-native spider species at these locations. Many of these finds are of single specimens which fail to establish breeding populations. However a few have been more successful and are now turning up more regularly. Many of these are hot-house species which are climatically constrained to living within heated buildings and glasshouses, so are currently unlikely to become established outdoors in the UK climate. However, *Badumna longinqua* (L. Koch, 1867) the Grey House Spider is a notable exception.

Badumna longinqua is native to eastern Australia, but has been accidentally introduced to New Zealand, USA, Hawaii, Mexico, Brazil, Uruguay, Chile, Argentina, South Africa, Germany, Holland and Japan (Nentwig *et al.*, 2023, World Spider Catalog, 2023). In Holland and Germany it is still considered a hot-house species.

Badumna longinqua appears to have been first recorded in Britain in ~2021 with observations from Nottinghamshire (Eakringbirds 2023) and Plymouth, both associated with garden centres. Records have since been made in Sussex, Cornwall, Newcastle, Sunderland and Neath (T. Berry, G. Lyons, J. McGill, G. Tansley pers. comms.). These recent records have demonstrated that *B. longinqua* is no longer a hot-house species in Britain and is fully capable of living outside in the UK climate as a synanthropic spider.

I first observed this spider, or at least its distinctive web (Fig. 1), in Exeter (SX91949199) on 23rd December 2022. The web was slung across a metal lamp post, and I took James McGill and Nicola Bacciu to see it the following evening. They both agreed with the identification based on their familiarity with the species at its Plymouth location. James described the *Badumna* web as looking like laddered tights or an *Amaurobius* web suspended in midair – which is a very good description.

Guy Tansley recently (15th August 2023) visited the Newcastle population and took photos of the webs. He told me it was extremely common in the garden there,



Figure 1. *Badumna longinqua* web in Exeter.
© Richard Gallon.



Figure 2. *Badumna longinqua* webs on a bird box and metal bracket outdoors in a Newcastle garden.
© Guy Tansley.



Figure 3. *Badumna longinqua* female, Newcastle.
© Guy Tansley.



Figure 4. *Badumna longinqua* female, Newcastle.
© Richard Gallon.

with webs festooning fences and wooden garden structures (Figs. 2–5). The garden's owner also mentioned that this spider is present at her mother's garden in Sunderland.

Newcastle and Sunderland are considered particularly cold parts of England, so it is highly likely that *B. longinqua* will become a ubiquitous synanthropic spider across lowland Britain in time.

Please look out for this species and submit your records to the SRS. Tylan Berry reckons this species could already be well established across Britain, so it's time to pay more attention to those '*Amaurobius*' webs!

References

- Eakringbirds 2023. Online at <http://www.eakringbirds.com/eakringbirds3/arachnidsinfocusbadumnaalonginqua.htm>
 Nentwig, W., Blick, T., Bosmans, R., Gloor, D., Hänggi, A. & Kropf, C. 2023. Spiders of Europe. Version 11.2023. Online at <https://www.araneae.nmbe.ch>, accessed on 20/11/2023. <https://doi.org/10.24436/1>.
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Figure 5. *Badumna longinqua* web slung across an outdoor wooden bird table in a Newcastle garden.
© Guy Tansley.

Book now for the 2024 BAS Field Weekend to mid-Wales

by Richard Gallon

The BAS is delighted to announce that we'll be holding our next annual field weekend at Gregynog near Newtown in mid-Wales (Friday 31st May to Sunday 2nd June 2024).

Mid-Wales has traditionally been a poorly recorded part of Britain. With hardly any resident arachnologists the few recent records from the region have largely been made by visitors passing through.

Gregynog is an attractive timber-framed mansion set in ancient parkland. With ample recording opportunities on site and within close proximity to the venue we are bound to find some interesting species.

Venue

Gregynog
www.gregynog.org

Dates

31st May (Friday late afternoon) to 2nd June (midday Sunday) 2024

Cost

£245.40 (a £50 deposit paid to the BAS Treasurer is required by 1st April 2024 to secure your place). The price includes your accommodation and evening meals (Friday and Saturday nights), breakfast (Saturday & Sunday), packed lunch (Saturday & Sunday). There is a bar and events room on site. Microscope identification sessions, evening lectures and fieldwork are planned.

Railway

The nearest railway station is at Newtown, 7 km south of the venue. We can arrange lifts to-from the railway station for those traveling by train.

Parking

There is carparking on site, including two charge points for those with electric vehicles.

Please visit Gregynog's website for more details about other facilities (Gardens, Cafe, Library).

We are currently limited to 20 places (although we might be able to increase this if needed, but I'd suggest you book early to secure your place).

To book onto the BAS Field Weekend please contact Richard Gallon (rgallon47@gmail.com), stating your dietary requirements (vegetarian, vegan etc.) and any allergies you need to make catering staff aware of.

Remember we also have BAS grants available to help fund the attendance of student members etc., so please consider applying should you need financial assistance to attend. Please contact BAS Secretary Geoff Oxford (secretary@britishspiders.org.uk) if you wish to apply for such a grant.