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THE AUSTRALASIAN ARACHNOLOGICAL SOCIETY

We aim to promote interest in the ecology, behaviour and taxonomy of arachnids of the Australasian region.

MEMBERSHIP

Membership is open to amateurs, students and professionals, and is managed by our Administrator :

Richard J. Faulder
Agricultural Institute
Yanco, New South Wales 2703.
Australia.

email : faulder@agric.nsw.gov.au

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Previous issues of the newsletter are available at \$2 per issue plus postage.

ARTICLES

The newsletter depends on your contributions! We encourage articles on a range of topics including current research activities, student projects, upcoming events or behavioural observations.

Please send articles to the Editor:

Dr Tracey Churchill
Museum & Art Gallery of the
Northern Territory
GPO Box 4646
Darwin NT 0801
Australia.

email: spider@octa4.net.au

Format: i) typed or legibly printed on A4 paper or ii) as text or MS Word file on CD, 3 ½ floppy disk, or via email.

LIBRARY

The AAS has a large number of reference books, scientific journals and papers available for loan or as photocopies, for those members who do not have access to a scientific library. Professional members are encouraged to send in their arachnological reprints.

Contact our librarian :

Jean-Claude Herremans
PO Box 291
Manly,
New South Wales 1655. Australia.

email: jclh@ihug.com.au

COVER PHOTOGRAPH by Matjaz Kuntner:
Arbanitis variabilis ♂ from S.E. Qld.

EDITORIAL



It is great to read in this issue that Professor Barry Richardson has converted from being an insect ecologist to a salticid taxonomist! Keep your eyes open for the cute jumpers of interest to his project. And for those keen to collect spiders for a worthy scientific cause, also check out the list of taxa for the large scale project which Dr Cor Vink is involved in. Be sure, however, to get advice from your nearest museum curator about the proper process for sending material overseas.

Thankyou to the Macquarie University spider lab for an update – sounds like we have lots more to read about from there! I have introduced a new category of "Undergraduate Projects" so we can read about the outcome of a scorpion study in this issue, and other such projects in the future, which members would rarely get the chance to to read about otherwise.

Dr Volker Framenau and Matthew Bruce have provided two conference reviews to help keep us up with the latest arachnological meetings.

For those members who wait by the letterbox for their next society newsletter, you would be pleased to see that the issues have recently been larger. With a rise in printing costs it is more efficient to favour newsletter size over frequency of production. So keep up the great work contributing all your arachnological news!

..... Tracey



LIBRARY UPDATE

Our librarian, Jean-Claude Herremans, would like to thank Dr Lourenço (Paris), Dr Robert Jackson (University of Canterbury), and Dr Cor Vink (previously from Lincoln University) for contributing their recent publications to the society library. Any other Australasian publications are most welcome!

The current library holdings by taxon are:

Acari:	2791
Amblypygi:	93
Araneae:	7956
Opiliones:	509
Palpigrada:	85
Pseudoscorpiones:	770
Pycnogonida:	70
Ricinulei:	59
Schizomida:	78
Scorpiones:	628
Solifugae:	125
Uropygi:	69

ARACHNOLOGICAL ACTIVITIES



AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL INSECT COLLECTION

Barry Richardson & Bruce Halliday

After some years of quiet slumber, work on the spider collection at the Australian National Insect Collection in Canberra has recommenced. This is a consequence of two new faces appearing on the scene.

A volunteer, Sandy Roy, is working on re-curating the collection. He is re-bottling old material that has been stored in inappropriate containers, upgrading the collection by extracting the spiders from the more than 2,000 bulk samples collected by ANIC staff from a wide range of habitats throughout Australia, and sorting them to family as far as possible. This effort will provide a very useful source of material on the litter living spiders of Australia

Barry Richardson has been appointed an Honorary Fellow in CSIRO Entomology and has moved back to Canberra from the University of Western Sydney. He has given up work on insect communities (and other things) to begin taxonomic studies on the jumping spiders of Australia, an entirely new field for him. This work is being carried out in conjunction with Marek Zabka, the recognised world expert on Australian salticids.

Barry and Marek plan to continue Marek's previous work through further revisions of genera, the description of many new genera, and the production of regularly updated interactive keys to the family. The latter process, using BioLink, will eventually include known and predicted distribution maps and photographs of the genera and ultimately of each species. The project is an ambitious one, given that there are more than 300 described species and at least 1,000 yet to be described, but each step will be self contained and useful in itself. Barry and Marek are very interested in receiving suitable material and information from anyone who has any knowledge of Australian salticids. Barry can be contacted at barrysalt@bigpond.com and Marek on zabka@ap.siedlce.pl.

Bruce Halliday is Curator of Arachnids in ANIC, and is continuing his interest in mites. His present priorities are pest mites that occur in stored grain, and a generic level overview and keys to genera of Astigmata (Bruce.Halliday@csiro.au).

MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY

Matthew Bruce

At the beginning of 2001 Dr Mariella Herberstein moved from the University of Melbourne to take up a lectureship at Macquarie University. During her brief period at Macquarie she has managed to set up a research laboratory and attracted a number of students working on a broad range of projects concerned with spider and preying mantid behaviour, ecology and phylogenetics. This is despite the

lab's less than ideal position in the basement and next to the university's cobalt source.

Currently the lab consists of Mariella, Astrid Heiling (post-doctoral student), Greg Holwell (PhD student) and myself. Anne Gaskett (research assistant), Abby Fleisch (visiting student from the USA), and Honours students Felicity Hoese, Anne Wignall and Phoebe Hill have recently completed their time in the lab and are reported to be recovering well.

Mariella is working on various aspects of the foraging and mating behaviour of invertebrates such as spiders and praying mantids. Her current projects include the signal function of web decorations in orb web spiders. These are those curious crosses found in St. Andrew's Cross spiders. Functional hypotheses include prey attraction, predator deterrent or web advertisement to prevent accidental damage by birds. This research also forms the basis of my PhD. project. Another research interest of Mariella's is the intriguing mating behaviour of orb-web spiders. Sexual cannibalism is quite common in this group of spiders, but the evolutionary significance is still unclear: is it a case of male sacrifice or simply a female foraging strategy? This research was conducted in collaboration with Anne Gaskett, who until recently was employed as a research assistant. Anne still maintains an active interest in the lab and has gone on to become our webmaster.

Astrid Heiling, a Schroedinger Fellow from Austria, is collaborating with Mariella on a project that looks at the foraging behaviour of crab spiders. Typically these

spiders sit on flowers and ambush unsuspecting pollinators. Astrid's results so far suggest that that crab spiders attract pollinating insects to flowers due to their colour contrast with the flower. This research has been very fruitful, already producing one *Nature* paper.

Four students have recently completed research projects in the lab. Abby Fleisch studied studying the effect of several meteorological parameters, including temperature, humidity, and visibility, on the number and length of web decorations of the orb-web weaving spider, *Argiope keyserlingi*. Felicity Hoese looked at the function of bright white and yellow bands on the abdomen of St. Andrew's Cross spiders. Anne Wignall was working with Astrid on the flower symmetry preferences of honeybees and crab spiders.

Our basement lab (dungeon) has grown very quickly from its humble beginnings so if anyone wants to come and join us please contact Mariella (m.herberstein@bio.mq.edu.au) or check out our website (www.bio.mq.edu.au/behaviouralecology/). We have a number of potential honours and PhD projects in behavioural ecology, taxonomy, ecology and phylogenetics. If anybody has any *Argiope* specimens or knows where to get some, I am looking for a number of species to complete my phylogeny of this genus. Please contact me (mbruce@bio.mq.edu.au). We are always keen to receive visitors so if anybody is visiting Sydney drop us a line and we'll show you around the lab (you may even be invited to one of Mariella's famous morning teas).

**Australasian Spiders Needed
for the Tree of Life:
Phylogeny of Spiders**

Dr Cor Vink

Department of Biology
San Diego State University
San Diego, CA 92182-4614
USA

A team of arachnologists based in the United States, Argentina, Denmark and Spain are currently working on a five year project funded by the National Science Foundation to produce a phylogeny of all 109 spider families.

The phylogeny will be based on molecular and morphological data collected from at least 500 genera of spiders representing all the known spider families and their closest relatives (Amblypygi, Uropygi, and Schizomida). These genera have been selected to maximize the resolution of deep branches within the spider phylogeny. Of the taxa selected for this study, a quarter of them are found in Australia or New Zealand, which illustrates the importance of Australasia in understanding worldwide spider systematics.

This project will greatly benefit Australasian arachnology by resolving many of the unknown interfamilial relationships. It also has the potential to correctly place many of the difficult Australasian genera which are currently in families they don't really belong in (e.g.,

New Zealand members of the Agelenidae) or where their proper family is unknown (e.g., Australian Amaurobioidea).

For a large project like this a lot of fresh material is needed for DNA sequencing and scanning electron microscope (SEM) work. Earlier this year, Jason Bond and Marshal Hedin spent six weeks collecting mygalomorphs in Australia and other collecting trips are planned for New Zealand and Australia. Nevertheless, it would be extremely helpful if Australasian arachnologists were able to collect material for the project.

The associated table indicates the taxa being studied in Australia and New Zealand. It is preferable that specimens representing a genus will be the type species for that genus, but this may not be possible for many taxa. If you can help collect material please contact the "clademaster" associated with those taxa (email addresses are listed below). They will provide you with guidance on preservation and how many specimens might be required. Ideally several fresh specimens of each taxa are needed with at least one preserved in 95-100% ethanol for DNA work. You will also need to contact your local museum curator to ensure that the correct international mailing procedures are followed and the appropriate paperwork is included. For non-institutionally funded arachnologists it should be possible to organize payment for postage. Specimens collected will also need to be accompanied by an American Museum of Natural History transfer form, which is available at: <http://research.amnh.org/amcc/specimentransferform.pdf>.

Australasian taxa within the Tree of Life project and Clademasters. Asterisks show which taxa are adequately sampled. Abbreviations apply to Australian states, and 'NZ' to New Zealand.

Genus	Family	Location	Clademaster
<i>Missulena</i> *	Actinopodidae	Australia	J.Bond
<i>Neoramia</i>	Agelenidae	NZ	C.Griswold
<i>Orepukia</i>	Agelenidae	NZ	C.Griswold
<i>Tararua</i>	Agelenidae	NZ	C.Griswold
<i>Midgee</i>	Amaurobiidae	Qld, NSW	G.Hormiga
<i>Pakeha</i>	Amaurobiidae	NZ	G.Hormiga
<i>Poaka</i>	Amaurobiidae	NZ	C.Griswold
<i>Strenosoma</i>	Amaurobiidae	Vic, NSW, Qld	G.Hormiga
<i>Austrammo</i>	Amoxenidae	Australia	N.Platnick
<i>Amphinecta</i>	Amphinctidae	NZ	C.Griswold
<i>Aorangia</i>	Amphinctidae	NZ	C.Griswold
<i>Kababina</i>	Amphinctidae	Qld	C.Griswold
<i>Maniho</i>	Amphinctidae	NZ	C.Griswold
<i>Quemusia</i>	Amphinctidae	Qld, NSW	C.Griswold
<i>Amaurobioides</i>	Anyphaenidae	NZ, Tas, SA	M.Ramirez
<i>Arkys</i>	Araneidae	Australia	N.Scharff
<i>Eriophora</i>	Araneidae	Australia, NZ	N.Scharff
<i>Poecilopachys</i>	Araneidae	Qld, NSW, NZ	N.Scharff
<i>Austrarchaea</i>	Archeidae	Qld, WA, Vic	N.Platnick
<i>Hickmania</i>	Austrochilidae	Tas	M.Ramirez
<i>Aureocrypta</i>	Barychelidae	WA	J.Bond
<i>Idiommata</i>	Barychelidae	WA, SA, Qld	J.Bond
<i>Mandjelia</i>	Barychelidae	Qld, WA, NT	J.Bond
<i>Moruga</i>	Barychelidae	Qld, WA	J.Bond
<i>Synothele</i>	Barychelidae	WA, SA	J.Bond
<i>Supunna</i>	Corinnidae	Australia, NZ	M.Ramirez
<i>Cryptothele</i>	Cryptothelidae	Qld	M.Ramirez
<i>Amauropelma</i>	Ctenidae	Qld	C.Griswold
<i>Matilda</i>	Cyatholipidae	Qld, NSW	C.Griswold
<i>Tekella</i>	Cyatholipidae	NZ	C.Griswold
<i>Toddiana</i>	Cyatholipidae	Qld	C.Griswold
<i>Cycloctenus</i>	Cycloctenidae	Australia, NZ	C.Griswold

<i>Toxopsiella</i>	Cycloctenidae	NZ	C.Griswold
<i>Kiama</i> *	Cyrttaucheniidae	NSW	J.Bond
<i>Badumna</i>	Desidae	Australia, NZ	C.Griswold
<i>Desis</i>	Desidae	NZ, Vic, Tas, WA	C.Griswold
<i>Gasparia</i>	Desidae	NZ	C.Griswold
<i>Gohia</i>	Desidae	NZ	C.Griswold
<i>Laestrygones</i>	Desidae	NZ	C.Griswold
<i>Lamina</i>	Desidae	NZ	C.Griswold
<i>Matachia</i>	Desidae	NZ	C.Griswold
<i>Myro</i>	Desidae	NZ, Tas	C.Griswold
<i>Otagoa</i>	Desidae	NZ	C.Griswold
<i>Paramatachia</i>	Desidae	Qld, NSW, SA, Tas	C.Griswold
<i>Pitonga</i>	Desidae	Qld, NT, WA	C.Griswold
<i>Toxops</i>	Desidae	Tas	C.Griswold
<i>Cethegus</i> *	Dipluridae	Qld, SA, WA, NSW	J.Bond
<i>Troglo diplura</i> *	Dipluridae	WA, SA	J.Bond
<i>Masteria</i>	Dipluridae	Qld	J.Bond
<i>Meedo</i>	Gallieniellidae	WA, SA, Vic, NSW, Qld	M.Ramirez
<i>Eilica</i>	Gnaphosidae	Qld, WA, Vic, NSW	N.Platnick
<i>Hemicolea</i>	Gnaphosidae	Qld, NSW, WA, Tas, NZ	N.Platnick
<i>Gradungula</i>	Gradungulidae	NZ	M.Ramirez
<i>Macrogradungula</i>	Gradungulidae	Qld	M.Ramirez
<i>Pianoa</i>	Gradungulidae	NZ	M.Ramirez
<i>Progradungula</i>	Gradungulidae	NSW, Vic	M.Ramirez
<i>Tarlina</i>	Gradungulidae	Qld, NSW	M.Ramirez
<i>Atrax</i> *	Hexathelidae	NSW	J.Bond
<i>Hadronyche</i> *	Hexathelidae	NSW, SA, Qld, Vic, Tas	J.Bond
<i>Hexathele</i> *	Hexathelidae	NZ	J.Bond
<i>Teranodes</i> *	Hexathelidae	Tas, Vic	J.Bond
<i>Plesiothele</i>	Hexathelidae	Tas	J.Bond
<i>Holarchaea</i>	Holarchaeidae	NZ, Tas	N.Platnick
<i>Huttonia</i>	Huttoniidae	NZ	N.Platnick
<i>Aganippe</i> *	Idiopidae	SA, NT, WA, Vic, NSW, Qld	J.Bond
<i>Arbanitis</i> *	Idiopidae	Qld, SA, WA, NSW, Vic, Tas	J.Bond
<i>Centrothele</i>	Lamponidae	Qld, NSW	N.Platnick
<i>Graycassis</i>	Lamponidae	NSW, Qld	N.Platnick

Genus	Family	Location	Clademaster
<i>Lampona</i>	Lamponidae	Australia, NZ	N.Platnick
<i>Lamponina</i>	Lamponidae	Australia	N.Platnick
<i>Paralampona</i>	Lamponidae	Vic, NSW, Tas, WA, Qld	N.Platnick
<i>Pseudolampona</i>	Lamponidae	SA, WA, Vic, NSW, Qld	N.Platnick
<i>Australolinyphia</i>	Linyphiidae	Qld	G.Horniga
<i>Haplisis</i>	Linyphiidae	NZ	G.Horniga
<i>Laetesia</i>	Linyphiidae	WA, NZ, SA	G.Horniga
<i>Novafroneta</i>	Linyphiidae	NZ	G.Horniga
<i>Venonia</i>	Lycosidae	Qld	P.Sierwald
<i>Malkara</i>	Malkaridae	Qld	N.Scharff
<i>Zearchaea</i>	Mecysmaucheniidae	NZ	N.Platnick
<i>Micropholcomma</i>	Micropholcommatidae	Vic, Tas, NSW, Qld	N.Platnick
<i>Parapua</i>	Micropholcommatidae	NZ	N.Platnick
<i>Textricella</i>	Micropholcommatidae	Tas, NZ, Qld, NSW	N.Platnick
<i>Moggridgea</i> *	Migidae	SA, WA	J.Bond
<i>Migas</i>	Migidae	NZ	J.Bond
<i>Australomimetes</i>	Mimetidae	Qld, NSW	N.Scharff
<i>Mituliodon</i>	Miturgidae	Australia	M.Ramirez
<i>Miturga</i>	Miturgidae	Australia	M.Ramirez
<i>Ixamatus</i> *	Nemesiidae	Qld, NSW	J.Bond
<i>Kwonkan</i> *	Nemesiidae	WA, SA	J.Bond
<i>Merredinia</i> *	Nemesiidae	WA	J.Bond
<i>Teyloides</i> *	Nemesiidae	SA	J.Bond
<i>Xamiatus</i> *	Nemesiidae	Qld, NSW	J.Bond
<i>Neolana</i>	Neolanidae	NZ	C.Griswold
<i>Ambicodamus</i>	Nicodamidae	WA, SA, Vic, NSW, Qld	N.Scharff
<i>Forstertyna</i>	Nicodamidae	NZ	N.Scharff
<i>Megadictyna</i>	Nicodamidae	NZ	N.Scharff
<i>Nicodamus</i>	Nicodamidae	Qld, NSW, Vic, SA, WA	N.Scharff
<i>Australobus</i>	Orsolobidae	WA	M.Arnedo
<i>Tasmanoonops</i>	Orsolobidae	Australia	M.Arnedo
<i>Pararchaea</i>	Pararchaeidae	NZ, Tas, Qld	N.Platnick
<i>Periegops</i>	Periegopidae	NZ, Qld	N.Platnick
<i>Perenethis</i>	Pisauridae	Qld	P.Sierwald
<i>Molycrria</i>	Prodidomidae	NSW, WA	N.Platnick

<i>Myandra</i>	Prodidomidae	Vic, WA, Tas	N.Platnick
<i>Fecenia</i>	Psechridae	Qld	C.Griswold
<i>Psechrus</i>	Psechridae	Qld	C.Griswold
<i>Portia</i>	Sallicidae	Qld	W.Maddison
<i>Dictis</i>	Scytodidae	Australia	N.Platnick
<i>Isopeda</i>	Sparassidae	Australia	M.Ramirez
<i>Baiami</i>	Stiphidiidae	WA, SA, Vic	C.Griswold
<i>Cambridgea</i>	Stiphidiidae	NZ	C.Griswold
<i>Ischalea</i>	Stiphidiidae	NZ	C.Griswold
<i>Procambridgea</i>	Stiphidiidae	NSW, Qld, Vic	C.Griswold
<i>Stiphidion</i>	Stiphidiidae	NSW, Qld, Vic, NZ	C.Griswold
<i>Anapistula</i>	Symphytognathidae	NT, WA, Qld	M.Ramirez
<i>Meringa</i>	Synotaxidae	NZ	C.Griswold
<i>Pahora</i>	Synotaxidae	NZ	C.Griswold
<i>Nanometa</i>	Tetragnathidae	WA	G.Hormiga
<i>Nephila</i>	Tetragnathidae	Australia	G.Hormiga
<i>Hadrotarsus</i>	Theridiidae	Tas	J.Coddington
<i>Bomis</i>	Thomisidae	WA, Qld	M.Ramirez
<i>Stephanopsis</i>	Thomisidae	Australia	M.Ramirez
<i>Rebilus</i>	Trochanteriidae	Qld, NSW	N.Platnick
<i>Trachycosmus</i>	Trochanteriidae	Australia	N.Platnick
<i>Waitkera</i>	Uloboridae	NZ	J.Coddington
<i>Asteron</i>	Zodariidae	Qld, NSW, Vic, Tas	M.Ramirez
<i>Storena</i>	Zodariidae	Australia	M.Ramirez
<i>Zealoctenus</i>	Zoridae	NZ	C.Griswold
<i>Uliodon</i>	Zoropsidae	NZ	M.Ramirez
<i>Charinus</i>	Charinidae	Qld	L.Prendini
<i>Charon</i>	Charontidae	Qld, NT	L.Prendini
<i>Apozomus</i>	Hubbardiidae	Qld, NT	L.Prendini
<i>Attenuizomus</i>	Hubbardiidae	NT	L.Prendini
<i>Bamazomus</i>	Hubbardiidae	Qld, WA	L.Prendini
<i>Brignolizomus</i>	Hubbardiidae	Qld	L.Prendini
<i>Draculoides</i>	Hubbardiidae	Qld, WA	L.Prendini
<i>Julattenius</i>	Hubbardiidae	Qld	L.Prendini
<i>Notozomus</i>	Hubbardiidae	Qld	L.Prendini

Specimens of Amblypygi and Schizomida are also need as outgroup taxa for the project and are listed separately at the bottom of the table.

Clademasters' e-mail addresses:

Jason Bond

bondja@mail.ecu.edu

Martin Ramirez

ramirez@amnh.org

Norman Platnick

platnick@amnh.org

Miquel Arnedo

marnedo@porthos.bio.ub.es

Nikolaj Scharff

nscharff@zmuc.ku.dk

Jonathan Coddington

coddington.jon@nsmnh.si.edu

Charles Griswold

cgriswold@calacademy.org

Gustavo Hormiga

hormiga@gwu.edu

Petra Sierwald

sierwald@fieldmuseum.org

Wayne Maddison

wmaddison@interchange.ubc.ca

Lorenzo Prendini

lorenzo@amnh.org

INTERNATIONAL ARACHNOLOGICAL SUBSCRIPTIONS



Subscriptions to international journals and/or societies listed below will be collated by our society's administrator in January. Members have the benefit of paying in Australian dollars and avoiding a bank draft fee. Our fellow societies also appreciate a co-ordinated subscription and payment. When existing members receive their notices they can forward these with payment to our administrator, Richard Faulder (see page 1 for details) by 30 January, 2004.

- ◆ Acta Sinica
- ◆ American Arachnol. Soc.
- ◆ Arachnol.Soc. of Japan
- ◆ Arthropoda Selecta
- ◆ British Arachnol. Soc.
- ◆ Internat'l Soc. Arachnol.
- ◆ Revue Arachnologique

Those members who wish to join a society or to subscribe to a journal can email Richard who will advise you of the relevant 2004 fee once it is available.

UNDERGRADUATE PROJECTS



Recolonisation of rehabilitated bauxite mine pits by the scorpion *Urodacus planimanus*.

by Kristofer Collett

A summary of a 3rd year Biology project
at Curtin University of Technology,
& supervised by Karl Brennan.

This study examined recolonisation by the scorpion *Urodacus planimanus* of rehabilitated bauxite mines, operated by Alcoa World Alumina Australia, from surrounding jarrah (*Eucalyptus marginata*) forest.

The study was conducted at the Jarrahdale Mine, 45 km southeast of Perth, Western Australia. Scorpions were surveyed by visual searches under rocks in both mine pits and surrounding jarrah forest. These data were used to determine whether recolonisation of mine pits occurs, and if it had, at what age since mining was recolonisation likely.

Habitat variables that may potentially influence the occurrence of *U. planimanus* were identified. An assessment was then made of whether the variables to which *U. planimanus* may be responding differed

between forest sites and rehabilitated mine pits.

Recolonisation of rehabilitated mine pits by *U. planimanus* was shown in the study, but only at one pit. As such, assessment as to what age recolonisation occurs was limited. Habitat variables that may potentially influence scorpions were rocks with a topside surface area over 60 cm² (scorpion abundance) and leaf litter cover (scorpion biomass). This rock size showed significant difference with scorpion abundance, over all sites sampled.

Between jarrah forests and rehabilitated mine pits, a significant difference was also found in the abundance of rocks with topside area of 30 cm² and 40 cm². These rocks were considerably higher in number for the jarrah forests compared with the rehabilitated mine pits. Simple regression analysis of the data set restricted to rocks under-which scorpions were found showed that scorpions were correlated as living under these sized rocks.



CONFERENCE REVIEW

34th Australian Entomological Society/6th Invertebrate Biodiversity & Conservation Combined Conference

Hobart, 28 Sep - 3 Oct 2003

'Arachnological Anecdotes from Tasmania'

Tassie is always worth a trip, particularly if you are attending a scientific conference on your way to examine the arachnology collections of the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery (TMAG) in Hobart, and the Queen Victorian Museum and Art Gallery in Launceston (QVMAG) (which was, what I did...). Of course, there are numerous other attractions in Tasmania and I have rarely visited a meeting with so many delegates embarking on post-conference sightseeing, such as extended trips around the island state or caving expeditions, to name just two.

Entitled 'Invertebrates and Environmental Change', this event integrated the annual Australian Entomological Society, and biennial Invertebrate Biodiversity and Conservation, meetings. The conference was excellent, extremely well organized and executed by the organizing committee which consisted of members from the University of Tasmania, Department of Primary Industries, Water

and the Environment, Forestry Tasmania, TMAG, and the Queensland Museum (!) and chaired by Geoff Allen from the University of Tasmania. There were no technical hiccups at all, and the food provided by the host venue, the Corus Hotel, was sensational.

There were an extremely high number of student presentations, all of impressive quality. Moreover, two presentations with arachnological contents snatched student prizes for their class: 'Genotypic and phenotypic adaptation in an aerially dispersing spider *Eriophora heroine*' by Hayley Sharp from the Australian National University (with co-author Neil Murray, of La Trobe University) won the poster competition, and; 'Problems of 'apparent' predictability inherent in short-term ecological research: a case study of flood-related changes in beetle and spider assemblages' by Andrea Ballinger (with co-authors Sam Lake and Ralph McNally), from Monash University, came third in the oral presentation section. Well done!

There were a number of presentations dealing with arachnological subjects and the following list [with email contacts in brackets] demonstrates the width and depth of subjects covered:

Oral presentations:

Ballinger, A., Lake S. & McNally, R.
'Problems of 'apparent' predictability inherent in short-term ecological research: a case study of flood-related changes in beetle and spider assemblages'.
[andrea.ballinger@sci.monash.edu.au]

Beaulieu, F. 'Is each forest type inhabited by a distinct invertebrate fauna? Insight from a group of predatory soil-inhabiting mites (Acari: Mesostigmata)'. [fbeaulieu@zen.uq.edu.au]

Beavis, A. & Rowell, D. 'A comparison of maternal investment in a social and non-social species of huntsman spider'. [amber.beavis@anu.edu.au]

Doran, N. 'Potential bioresources in Tasmanian spiders and other invertebrates: preliminary work, future possibilities and implications for conservation management'. [niall.doran@dpiwe.tas.gov.au]

Framenau, V. W., Harvey, M. & Austin, A. D. 'Dances with wolves down under'. [framenau@museum.wa.gov.au]

Gotch, T., Framenau, V. W. & Austin, A. D. 'The wolf spiders of the South Australian mound springs: their identity revealed'. [travis.gotch@adelaide.edu.au]

Ridsdill-Smith, J., Pavri, C., Reidy-Crofts, J. & Edwards, O. 'Increased pasture diversity to reduce populations of red-legged mites and Lucerne flies'. [james.ridsdill-smith@csiro.au]

Sharp, H. & Murray, N. 'Gene flow and local adaptation in an aerially dispersing spider *Eriophora heroine*'. [hayley.sharp@anu.edu.au]

Umina, P. & Hoffman, A. 'Diapause strategies of earth mites and implications for pest control'. [p.umina@latrobe.edu.au]

Weeks, A. & Stouthammer, R. 'Increased fecundity and partial cytoplasmic incompatibility associated with infection by an intracellular bacterium from the Cytophaga-Flavobacterium-Bacteroides phylum in the predatory mite, *Metaseiulus occidentalis*'. [a.weeks@latrobe.edu.au]

Posters

Bashford, D., Muirhead, A. & Boutin, L. 'The spider fauna utilizing *Eucalyptus obliqua* at the Warra LTER site in southern Tasmania'.

Durrant, B. 'Biogeographical patterns of zodariid spiders (Araneae, Zodariidae) in the wheatbelt region, Western Australia' [bradleyd@calm.wa.gov.au]

Stay tuned for the XXII International Congress of Entomology 'Strength in Diversity' in Brisbane (15 – 21 August 2004; www.ccm.com.au/icoe) and the next 'Invertebrate Biodiversity and Conservation Meeting' in Canberra in 2005!

Dr Volker Framenau

Department of Terrestrial Invertebrates
Western Australian Museum
Francis St,
Perth, W.A. 6000



CONFERENCE REPORT

20th European Colloquium Of Arachnology

Despite the tyranny of distance, two intrepid Australian arachnologists made the epic journey to Szombathely, Hungary for the 20th European Colloquium of Arachnology.

The meeting highlighted the diversity of arachnological research being conducted across Europe and beyond. Papers and posters were presented on a wide variety of topics including behaviour, ecology, morphology, taxonomy, systematics, agroecology, physiology and even the impact of spiders on humans (arachnophobia). The meeting also included two special symposia, "Spiders as ecological indicators" and "Spider senses", both of which highlighted the wider scientific importance of arachnological research.

The highlights of the meeting included two invited presentations, one by Yael Lubin on the evolution of sociality in spiders and the other by Axel Schmidt on vision in spiders. The other conference highlight for us was Anne receiving the prize for the best student presentation for her talk on sexual cannibalism in the St. Andrews Cross spider, *Argiope keyserlingi*. All rumours suggesting that she won only because the Hungarians thought that she needed a new t-shirt are

entirely false. In fact all of the winners already had very nice t-shirts!

Of course you can't have a European meeting without Russians, and we knew that they had arrived when a pile of smoked fish and vodka suitable for long, cold field seasons in Siberia appeared in the fridge! We were grateful for the incredible hospitality and friendliness of our hosts, and in particular we would like to thank Ferenc Samu and Csaba Szinetár for organising the conference, and Tamás Szuts for organising social events.

We certainly encourage society members to go to one of these meetings, which are held every year within Europe.

Anne Gaskett & Matthew Bruce
Department of Biological Sciences
Macquarie University
NSW 2109
