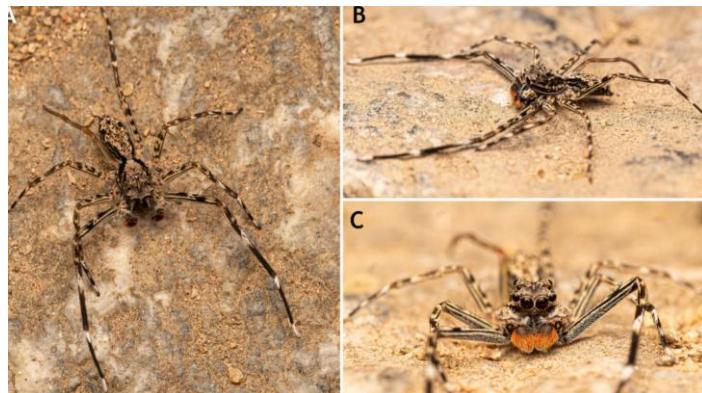


Discovery of *Spartaeus karigiri*: A New Jumping Spider Species in India

Introduction

A groundbreaking discovery by Indian researchers has added a new species to the jumping spider family (*Salticidae*). Named *Spartaeus karigiri*, this spider was found in the southern states of Karnataka and Tamil Nadu. The find is notable for marking the first presence of the genera *Spartaeus* and *Sonoita* in India.



Key Highlights of the Discovery

- **Species Identified:** *Spartaeus karigiri*
- **Location Found:** Karigiri (Elephant Hill), Devarayanadurga, Karnataka; also Villupuram district, Tamil Nadu.
- **Habitat Details:**
 - **Male:** Found in rocky crevices.
 - **Female:** Observed guarding egg clutch.
 - **Hunting skills:** Uses intelligent mimicry and web-invasion strategies
 - **Eyesight:** Exhibits keen vision, characteristic of Salticidae family
- **Research Led By:** John Caleb T.D., Saveetha Medical College, Chennai
- **Collaborators:**
 - Puthoor Pattammal Sudhin & Souvik Sen – Zoological Survey of India
 - B.G. Nisha – Wildlife Aware Nature Club
 - Gautam Kadam – Sacred Heart College, Kochi
 - Rajesh Sanap & Chinmay Maliye – Wildlife researchers

Significance of the Findings

- **Biogeographic Expansion:**

The discovery marks the **first Indian record** of *Spartaeus* and *Sonoita* genera, previously known only in Southeast Asia and Africa.

- **Additional Discovery:**

Sonoita cf. lightfooti, a species previously known only from Africa, was found in Karnataka, prompting speculation about its origin.

- **Behavioral Traits:**

These spiders are notable for their **deceptive hunting** techniques, including **mimicking prey** to invade other spiders' webs.

- **Taxonomic Clarity:**

The study also resolved a longstanding issue by synonymizing *Marpissa gangasagarensis* with *Phaeacius fimbriatus*, dating back to 1900.

Way Ahead

- **Further Research:**

Investigate whether *Sonoita cf. lightfooti*'s presence in India is a **natural range extension** or due to **human introduction**.

- **Conservation Efforts:**

Protecting habitats like Karigiri is essential for preserving these **newly discovered endemic species**.

- **Taxonomic Surveys:**

Continued taxonomic and ecological surveys across **underexplored Indian terrains** could reveal more undocumented species.

Conclusion

The identification of *Spartaeus karigiri* and the documentation of *Sonoita cf. lightfooti* represent major milestones in Indian arachnology. These findings not only broaden the known range of certain spider genera but also emphasize the rich biodiversity of southern India. Strengthening research and conservation is crucial to understanding and preserving such ecological treasures.