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ORIGINAL ARTICLE

NEW RECORDS ON SALTICIDAE AND THERIDIIDAE (ARANEAE) SPIDERS FROM ARMENIA

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ABSTRACT

New data on jumping spiders (Salticidae) and tangle-web spiders (Theridiidae) of Armenia are provided on the basis of recently collected specimens in various regions of Armenia. One species, *Ballus rufipes* (Simon, 1868) is recorded as new to the Caucasus Region, in addition to the following species: *Neon reticulatus* (Blackwall, 1853), *Pellenes brevis* (Simon, 1868), *Salticus scenicus* (Clerck, 1757) and *Synageles dalmaticus* (Keyserling, 1863) that belong to a family Salticidae, are recorded in Armenia for the first time.

A further 7 species of Theridiidae are recorded in Armenia for the first time *Kochiura aulica* (C. L. Koch, 1838), *Steatoda albomaculata* (De Geer, 1778), *Steatoda bipunctata* (Linnaeus, 1758), *Steatoda castanea* Clerk, 1757, *Steatoda grossa* (C. L. Koch, 1838), *Steatoda paykulliana* Walckenaer, 1806 and *Steatoda triangulosa* (Walckenaer, 1802).

Keywords: Araneae, Armenia, New records, Salticidae, Theridiidae.

INTRODUCTION

The commonly known jumping spiders Salticidae of Armenia are one of the primitively studied groups, although is the largest family of spiders in the world and have 6394 valid species (World spider catalog, 2022). The Caucasus regions' Salticidae species have been well studied by many authors such as Dunin (1979), Logunov and Marusik (2000), Logunov and Guseinov (2002), Azarkina (2002 a, b; 2003), and Logunov (2015).

Data on this group for Armenia was recorded first by Kulcyznski (1895) and during the Soviet Union and after it, many papers have been published by Wesolowska (1986); Logunov (1996, 1998 a and b, 1999, 2015), Logunov and Heciak (1996), Rakov and Logunov (1997), Logunov and Marusik (1998), Logunov and Rakov (1998) and Logunov and Guseinov (2002). A comprehensive checklist of the spiders of the territories of the former Soviet Union was written by Mikhailov (2013) and later published in another paper by him providing new data on Salticidae of Armenia (Mikhailov and Propistova, 2017). Moreover, the material of jumping spiders was deposited in the National Academy of Sciences of Republic of Armenia

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Scientific Center of Zoology and Hydroecology collection; and a part of which was published by Zarikian (2020), and the other part was studied and is presented herein.

Theridiidae is one of the most diverse families of spiders, including 2539 species classified in 125 genera (World Spider Catalog, 2020). Spiders in this family are widely known for having several synanthropic and cosmopolitan species (Levi, 1967); as well as species of medical importance (Faúndez and Tellez, 2016). In Armenia, only five species belong to Theridiidae have been recorded first by Kulcyznski (1895), then K.Y. Eskov recorded *Robertus arundineti* (O. P. Cambridge, 1891) (Eskov, 1987) and Y. Marusik mentioned some, in his spiders of the USSR (Marusik, 1989), in addition to the two species *Latrodectus tredecinguttatus* (Rossi, 1790) and *Enoplognatha ovata* (Clerck, 1757) which are mentioned in Otto's checklist of Armenia "The spiders of the Caucasus Ecoregion" (Otto, 2022), but is still uncertain or missing citation.

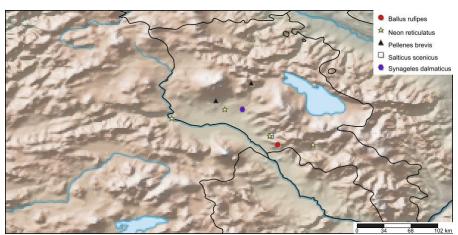
MATERIALS AND METHODS

Spiders were collected from five provinces of the Armenian republic, with an aspirator or hand collection. Specimens were photographed using a Canon EOS 2000 camera attached to the Bresser 58-04000 Trinocular Microscope.

Image stacking software was done and edited with the 'Photoshop CC 2018' software. Some female epigynes were dissected and presented as preparation. The map of Salticidae and Theridiidae species distribution was prepared (Map 1 and 2) using the Simple Mapper online program (Shorthouse, 2010). Jones-Walters (1989), Nentwig *et al.* (2021), Vanuytven (2021), and Metzner (2022) were used as resources to identify the species (based on eyes distribution, epigynes and pedipulps of species). Global distribution data and taxonomic references presented as it mentioned in the World Spider Catalog (2022). Material is stored in the NAS RA Scientific Center of Zoology and Hydro-ecology Institute collections .

We didn't attach any morphological description, because the given species below is as the same as the ones described in our references, and no need to reword them.

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Map (1): Salticidae distribution in current study.



Map (2): Theridiidae distribution studied in this work.

RESULTS

Family, Salticidae Blackwall, 1841 **Genus, Ballus** C. L. Koch, 1850

Ballus rufipes (Simon, 1868) (Pl. 1)

Synonym: Ballus depressus poecilopus Förster & Bertkau, 1883

Material examined: $2 \circlearrowleft \circlearrowleft$ Tigranashen, Ararat Province, 39.805770°N, 44.965550°E, 23.iv. 2021, 1400 m.a.s.l.

Description: *B. rufipes* with stocky abdomen covered, and half black and half gray hairs. Legs with reddish in their first half, then gradually become translucent, also have black marks, especially the 4th pair which is covered at its full length by a black line. Palp with soft cymbium.

Distribution: This species is widely distributed in South Europe and neighboring Turkey. This is the first record for Caucasus region and Armenia.

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Habitat: Semi desert and rocky slopes.

Genus, Neon Simon, 1876

Neon reticulatus (Blackwall, 1853) (Pl. 2)

Synonym: Salticus reticulatus Blackwall, 1853

Material examined: 1 ♀ Yervandashat, Armavir Province, 40.132018°N, 43.667430°E, 1.iv. 2021, 1090 m.a.s.l, 1 ♀ Shatin, Vayots Dzor Province, 39.847076°N, 45.316699°E, 10. v. 2021, 1313 m.a.s.l. 1♀, 1♂ Urtsadzor, Ararat Province, 39.900012°N, 44.848099°E, 06. v. 2021, 1800 m.a.s.l. Oshakan 1♂ Aragatsotn Province, 40.260888°N, 44.312550°E, 09. iv. 2021, 1000 m.a.s.l .

Description: Female has light brown head with darker region, sparsely covered with light hairs. Abdomen brown or greenish-brown with black latticed markings. Legs light brown with dark brown markings, legs I darker than others. Male similar to female but darker, thorn covered embolic area for male pulp; epigyne with U shape-like.

Distribution: This species is widely distribution in Europe to Far East; it seems also well distributed in Armenia (most of provinces).

Habitat: Damp (river-near) with light vegetation hills slopes or gorges and rural area.

Genus, Pellenes Simon, 1876

Pellenes brevis (Simon, 1868) (Pl. 3)

Synonym: Attus brevis Simon, 1868

Material examined: 1♀ Byurakan, Aragatsotn Province, 40.391698°N, 44.297898°E, 15 .v. 2021, 2113 m.a.s.l. 1♂ Aghavnazor, Kotayk Province, 40.56671°N, 44.68329°E, 17 .v. 2021, 1850 m.a.s.l.

Description: Female dark brown, abdomen with a white belt across center. Carapace dark brown with two white belts spread from anterior lateral eyes to rear. White hairs around anterior eyes; legs dark with white hairs. Male coloration as same as female, but pair of legs I dark thicker and bigger. Palps with long white hairs.

Distribution: This species was known in Turkey, Russia and many European countries (WSC, 2020); thus, our record from Armenia is the sequel of the whole range.

Habitat: The species has been collected from sub-mountain forest steppe zone.

Genus, Salticus Latreille, 1804

Salticus scenicus (Clerck, 1757) (Pl. 4)

Synonyms: Aranea albo-fasciata De Geer, 1778

Aranea fulvata Fabricius, 1778 Aranea scenica Linnaeus, 1758

Araneus scenicus Clerck, 1757 Attus candefactus Walckenaer, 1805

Attus histrionicus Westring, 1861

Attus scenicus Walckenaer, 1805 Calliethera alpina Giebel, 1867

Calliethera aulica Koch C.L., 1846

Calliethera histrionica Koch C.L., 1837

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Material examined: 1♂ Urtsadzor, Ararat Province, 39.900012°N, 44.848099°E, 06 .v. 2021, 1800 m.a.s.l.

Description: Abdomen black with three white cross ribons, carapace also black with few white spots or hairs around anterior eyes; palps white cone shape. Legs with light-dark; chelicerae remarkably large with folded fangs. Embolus tip with.

Distribution: Widespread in Palearctic; first record for Armenia. Habitat: The only male habitat in Armenia was simply grassland.

Genus, Synageles Simon, 1876

Synageles dalmaticus (Keyserling, 1863) (Pl. 5) Synonyms: Leptorchestes todillus Simon, 1876 Leptorchestes todillus Simon, 1871 Salticus dalmaticus Keyserling, 1863 Salticus todillus Simon, 1868

Material examined: 1[♀] Yerevan, 40.20709°N, 44.54449°E, 01.vi. 2021, 1280 m.a.s.l.

Description: Front abdomen brown, but next to it a lighter area with two white dots visible centrally; posterior with dark brown; carapace brown with black spots surrounding eyes; bunch of pale hairs between eyes; legs light brown with black longitudinal stripes; palps brown. Epigyne with border plate and posterior groove.

Distribution: This species widespread in Mediterranean Europe and Caucasus but is rare in Armenia, this is the first record for Armenia.

Habitat: The warm dry stony inhabited area.

Family, Theridiidae Sundevall, 1833

Genus, Kochiura Archer, 1950

Kochiura aulica (C. L. Koch, 1838) (Pl. 6)

Synonym: Theridion aulicum C. L. Koch, 1838

Material examined: 1♀ Tigranashen, Ararat Province, 39.795770°N, 44.965550°E, 28.v. 2021, 1400 m.a.s.l.

Description: Colour of female with fluctuating. Cephalothorax light brown, with a dark median strip. Abdomen with greyish coloration and dark median stripe dorsally with white spots; ventrally a dark rectangle extends from epigastric fold with white strips on each side. Sternum dark brown with light yellow center. Epigyne distinctive, pyramid-like with cut end.

 $Distribution:\ Widespread\ in\ Europe,\ North\ Africa\ and\ Caucasus.\ First\ record\ for\ Armenia\ .$

Habitat: Semi desert area vegetation.

Genus, Steatoda Sundevall, 1833

Steatoda albomaculata (De Geer, 1778) (Pl. 7)Synonyms: Aranea albomaculata De Geer, 1778Steatoda corollata Linnaeus, 1758

Material examined: 1♀ Mount Aragats, Aragatsotn Province, 40.43329°N, 44.26672°E, 04.vii.2020, 2490 m.a.s.l.; 1♀ Ali Bek, Kotayk Province, 40.5473°N, 44.686118°E, 17 .vii. 2020, 2234 m.a.s.l.; 1♀ Oshhakan, Aragatsotn Province, 40.26111°N, 44.31952°E, 09 .iv.

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2021, 1102 m.a.s.l.; 1 \bigcirc Shatin, Vayots Dzor Province, 39.847076°N, 45.316699°E, 10 .v. 2021, 1313 m.a.s.l .

Description: Females have light brown to black cephalothorax with feeble markings and almost black. Abdomen with a whitish band around anteriorly, and median pairs of spots, and two rows of patches laterally; while ventrally black with a light mark. Legs brownish, tibiae 1 dark brown. This species with clear epigynal groove, and angular anterior margin.

Distribution: Widespread in Palearctic; first record for Armenia.

Habitat: Stony mountains or hill slopes.

Steatoda bipunctata (Linnaeus, 1758) (Pl. 8)

Synonym: Steatoda brasiliana Keyserling, 1884

Material examined: 1 Jambarak, Gegharkunik province, 40.58472°N, 45.3515°E, 01 .viii. 2020, 1854 m.a.s.l.; 1 Yervandashat, Armavir Province, 40.132018°N, 43.667430°E, 01. iv. 2021, 1090 m.a.s.l.

Description: Cephalothorax brown. Reddish-brown abdomen, darker on sides, with a whitish band around anterior part, a median longitudinal series of small light spots on dorsal side; ventral side of abdomen with dark mark rings and a light triangle. Sternum brown, legs with yellow-brown colour. Epigyne with a square-like groove.

Distribution: Widespread in Palearctic, recorded in Canada and America. First record for Armenia

Habitat: Around/in inhabited area even buildings or abandoned places.

Steatoda castanea (Clerck, 1757) (Pl. 9)

Synonyms: Steatoda castanea (Olivier, 1789)

Steatoda huangyuanensis Zhu & Li, 1983

Material examined: 19,13 Geghadir, Kotayk Province, 40.16107°N, 44.66949°E, 30.x.2019, 1710 m.a.s.l.; 399,13 Kharberd, Ararat Province, 40.08472°N, 44.50708°E, 02.xi.2019, 950 m.a.s.l.

Description: Cephalothorax in female brown, with dark emitting striae; abdomen dark brown and scattered white spots, a median longitudinal whitish streak, and posteriorly with three transverse light lines; ventrally with long brown patches visible. Sternum and legs with yellow-brown; epigyne with two swellings. Male's colouration as in female; palp with a long tibia.

Distribution: Widespread in Europe and Caucasus, also recorded in Canada. First record for Armenia

Habitat: It is generally found in houses and in wall cracks of buildings; sometimes they are found in cultivated area under the stones.

Steatoda grossa (C. L. Koch, 1838) (Pl. 10)

Synonyms: Steatoda grossa obliterata (Franganillo, 1918)

Steatoda modesta (Bryant, 1948)

Steatoda punctilineata Mello-Leitão, 1939

Steatoda serica (Urquhart, 1886) Steatoda zonata (Keyserling, 1884)

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Material examined: 1♀ Yerevan, 40.20709°N, 44.54449°E, 07.ix. 2020, 1280 m.a.s.l.; 1♀ Yerevan, 40.20709°N, 44.54449°E, 11 .vii. 2021, 1280 m.a.s.l.

Description: Female has yellowish brown cephalothorax and brown to blackish abdomen, with a lighter pattern. A median longitudinal row of three blotches, and two lateral blotches spread like whiskers. Legs yellowish brown. Epigynal with obvious narrow groove.

Distribution: Widespread in most continents. First record for Armenia .

Habitat: Under cliffs and in buildings.

Steatoda paykulliana (Walckenaer, 1805) (Pl. 11)

Synonym: Steatoda latrodectoides (Franganillo, 1913)

Material examined. 1♀1♂ Kharberd, Ararat Province, 40.08472°N, 44.50708°E, 02.xi. 2019, 950 m.a.s.l.; 1♀Sardarapat, Armavir Province, 40.09168°N, 43.94171°E, 13.xi. 2019, 915 m.a.s.l.; 2♂♂ Geghadir, Kotayk Province, 40.16107°N, 44.66949°E, 30 .x. 2019, 1710 m.a.s.l.; 1♀ Getap, Vayots Dzor Province, 39.77368°N, 45.31531°E, 24 .xi. 2020, 1150 m.a.s.l.; 1♀ Dasht, Armavir Province, 40.2279°N, 44.3125°E, 04.viii.2020, 973 m.a.s.l.; 1♀ Goravan, Ararat Province, 39.88751°N, 44.71948°E, 06.v.2021, 966 m.a.s.l.

Description: Female with dark brown to black cephalothorax. Abdomen black, with a red or yellow band around front, sometimes with a median longitudinal series of ribbon; sternum and legs dark brown; two up-folded wing-like epigyne heavily sclerotized. Male's cephalothorax dark brown to black; abdomen black, with a whitish band around front with serrated edge median longitudinal band; ventrally with red-brown markings; legs yellow-brown; palp relatively small and dark.

Distribution: Widespread in South Europe and central Asia. First record for Armenia .

Habitat: Dry and semi desert area under the stones.

Steatoda triangulosa (Walckenaer, 1802) (Pl. 12)

Synonyms: Steatoda flavomaculata (Lucas, 1846)

Steatoda lugubris (Schenkel, 1963)

Steatoda saylori (Fox, 1940)

Material examined: 2♀♀ Yerevan, 40.20709°N, 44.54449°E, 02 .vi. 2021, 1280 m.a.s.l.

Description: cephalothorax of female with reddish brown and brown abdomen with whitish patterns. Sternum reddish brown, while legs pale yellowish; epigyne with specific rounded.

Distribution: Widespread in Palearctic, recorded in Canada and America. First record for Armenia .

Habitat: Very common in houses and abandoned buildings.

DISCUSSION

Twelve new records for the Armenian arachnofauna have been detected, thus increasing the spider biodiversity of the most studied family Salticidae to 46 species and Theridiidae to 12 in Armenia. *Ballus rufipes* is the first record for the Caucasus region and Armenia .

Despite the long history of research, the spider fauna of Armenia is still far from being well studied and needs further investigation. By this study, the total list of spiders has been enlarged to 249 species, but Armenia is still the poorest among the Caucasus region countries,

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neighboring Turkey (145 species of Salticidae and 84 species of Theridiidae) ((Nentwig *et al.*, 2021) and Iran (117 species of Salticidae and 64 species of Theridiidae) (Zamani *et al.*, 2020) regarding spider species richness due to the limited conducted researches of arachno-fauna studies and the insufficient data .

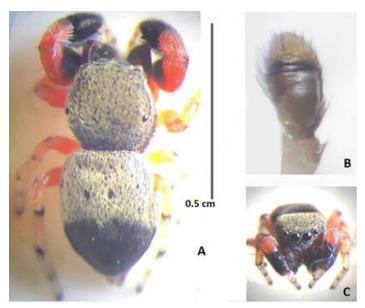


Plate (1): Ballus rufipes; (A) Habitus, (B) Pedipalp (10X), (C) Eyes.

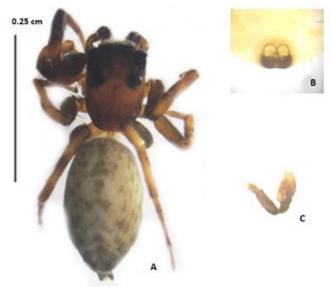


Plate (2): *Neon reticulatus*; (A) Habitus, (B) Epigyne (magnification x10), (C) Pedipalp (10X).



Plate (3): Pellenes brevis; (A) Habitus, (B) Pedipalp (10X), (C) Eyes.



Plate (4): Salticus Scenicus; (A) Habitus, (B) Pedipalp (10X).

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Plate (5): Synageles dalmaticus; (A) Habitus, (B) Epigyne (10X), (C) Eyes.



Plate (6): Kochiura aulica Habitus (subadult).



Plate (7): Steatoda albomaculata; (A) Habitus, (B) Epigyne (10X).



Plate (8): Steatoda bipunctata; (A) Habitus, (B) Epigyne (10x).

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Plate (9): Steatoda castanea Habitus.

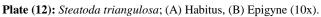


Plate (10): Steatoda grossa; (A) Habitus, (B) Epigyne (10X).



Plate (11): Steatoda paykulliana; (A) habitus, (B) Pedipalp (10x), (C) Epigyne (7X).





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CONCLUSIONS

The provisional tendency in species richness is inadequate to capture key changes in biodiversity for these two families (Salticidae and Teridiidae). We hope this paper will accelerate further studies on arachnology in Armenia and could contribute for future biodiversity data.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

The authors declare no conflict of interest related to the work in a manuscript.

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بيانات جديدة عن عناكب من عائلتيTheridiidae و Salticidae رتبة Araneae في أرمينيا

نوشك زيراكيان

المركز العلمي لعلم البيئة المائية ومعهد علم الحيوان، الأكاديمية الوطنية للعلوم، جمهورية أرمينيا.

تأريخ الاستلام: 2022/05/12، تأريخ القبول: 2022/09/2، تأريخ النشر: 2022/12/20

الخلاصة

تم تقديم بيانات جديدة عن العناكب القافزة Salticidae وعناكب الويب المتشابكة Theridiidae في أرمينيا على أساس العينات التي جمعت مؤخرًا في مناطق مختلفة من أرمينيا.

سُجِلَ النوع Ballus rufipes (Simon),1868 على أنه جديد لمنطقة القوقاز، كما ان Neon reticulatus :Theridiidae على النوع بالاضافة الى الانواع التالية ضمن عائلة Salticus cinicus (Clerck), Pellenes brevis (Simon, 1868)، (Blackwall, 1853)، (Synageles dalmaticus (Keyserling, 1863)، 1757، م تسجيلها لاول مرة في أرمينيا.

كما سجلت 7 أنواع أخرى من عائلة Theridiidae في أرمينيا لأول مرة شملت: Steatoda albomaculata (De Geer, 1778) ، Kochiura aulica (C.L. Koch,1838). Steatoda ، Steatoda grossa (C. L. Koch, 1838) ، Steatoda castanea Clerk, 1757 .Steatoda triangulosa (Walckenaer, 1802) و paykulliana Walckenaer, 1805