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NOTE ON A COLLECTION OF SPIDERS FROM PERIYAR TIGER RESERVE, KERALA, S. INDIA

Introduction

The richness and diversity of life forms in Kerala particularly Periyar Tiger Reserve is well known. Various animal groups in the area have been completely or incompletely documented. But Spiders, in spite of their importance in the ecosystem have been almost completely neglected in Kerala, as elsewhere in India. The reason for this could be attributed to the unattractive or scaring nature of the group. There are only very few references on the group in India; the latest being that of Pocock (1900), Tikader (1980, 1982, 1987) and Vijayalakshmi and Ahimaz (1993). The documentation of Spider fauna of India as per these references seem to be incomplete and does not represent a portion of the Kerala's rain forest fauna.

Periyar Tiger Reserve, situated on the Western Ghats in the Idukki District of Kerala seem to harbour a rich spider fauna as per preliminary observations. Spiders were collected from the Thekkady area of the reserve in April 1997 with a view to initiating an inventory of this little known group. The specimens are collected with forceps preserved in 5% formaldehyde and brought to the laboratory of the Rajiv Gandhi Centre for identification. But due to the non-availability of sufficient literature only few of the collected specimens could be properly identified.

The following is a list of 20 species of Spiders collected from Periyar in April 1997. The aim of this note is to highlight the importance of Spiders in this area and other parts of Kerala. The list though small, could be a start on the study of this little known animal group in Periyar and Kerala as a whole.

Systematic List

Phylum : Arthropoda
Class : Arachnida
Order : Araneae
Family : Araneidae Orb Weavers

1. *Gasteracantha geminata*
 Semi-evergreen forests, trees and shrubs
 Sri Lanka, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka
2. *G. sorona*
 Semi-evergreen forests, tree trunks, shrubs
 South India
3. *G. Dalyi*
 Semi-evergreen forests, low shrubs
 Tamil Nadu Hills
4. *Argiope pulchella*
 Moist deciduous forests, tree trunks, shrubs
 Andaman Islands, Laccadives, Whole of India - not recorded from Kerala

5. *A. undulata*
Moist deciduous forests - trees and shrubs
Sri Lanka, India (no record from Kerala), Burma
Family : Hersilidae
6. *A. aemula*
Moist deciduous forests - trees and shrubs
India - Nilgiri Hills, Andamans, Trivandrum, Burma, Sri Lanka, Malaysia
Family : Heteropodidae
7. *Leucauge fastigata*
Moist deciduous forests - small shrubs
India (Trichur, Parambikulam, Cochin, Orissa, U.P.), Sri Lanka, Burma
8. *L. tessellata*
Moist deciduous forests - small shrubs
India including Kerala (Cochin), Burma
9. *L. ventralis*
Moist deciduous forests - Small shrubs
S. India (Chalakudy, Parambikulam, Cochin), West Bengal, Sri Lanka, Burma
10. *L. celebesiana*
Moist deciduous forests, small shrubs
India including Tamil Nadu (no record from Kerala), Sri Lanka, Burma, China
11. *Ordagarius hobsoni*
Moist deciduous forests - small shrubs
India (Maharashtra), Sri Lanka
12. *Nephila maculata*
Semi-evergreen forests - trees and shrubs. India (Trivandrum, Tirunelveli, Kanara, Dehra Dun, Darjeeling), Sri Lanka, China, S.E. Asia.
13. *Hersilia pectinata*
Tree trunks and walls of building
Sri Lanka, Burma
14. *Heteropoda venatoria* Giant Crab Spider
Buildings - in cracks and among stored materials
Cosmopolitan - Tropical and Temperate countries
- Family : Pholcidae
15. *Pholcus phalangoides* Daddy longleg Spiders
Buildings - in cracks
Cosmopolitan
16. *Crosopriza lyoni* Box long legs
Hollows of trees, under rocks, corners of houses
India (Madras, Chingleput, Allahabad, Meerut), Burma
17. *Artema atlanta*
Hollow trees, beneath overhanging rocks
India, Sri Lanka, Burma
- Family : Lyssomanidae
18. *Lyssomanes andamensis*
Moist deciduous forests - small shrubs
Andamans
- Family : Oxyopidae, Lynx : Spiders
19. *Oxyopes rufisternum*
Moist deciduous forests - shrubs and grasses
Tropical and temperate countries

20. *Peucetia viridiana*
Moist deciduous forests - shrubs,
grasses
India (Madras, Pondicherry,
Travancore), Sri Lanka
- In a preliminary survey, 20 species of
Spiders were identified in Periyar Tiger
Reserve. It seems that the reserve has much
potential for a detailed Arachnid survey.

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