



Figure 8: Goldenrod Crab spider (*Misumena vatia*) eating a Chimney Sweeper moth (*Odezia atrata*) photographed with a fisheye lens to show alpine meadow habitat. Nordtirol, Austrian Alps, Austria, July. © Alex Hyde.

A final word on composition, always check your background for clutter. Very often if you just spend half a minute carefully bending distracting blades of grass out of the background of a scene, you will end up with a much cleaner looking composition. Generally, simple backgrounds give the subject more impact in the composition.

Including the Environment

Not all spider photography has to be done with macro lenses. I really enjoy using wide angle and even fisheye lenses to include plenty of habitat in the composition. The spider itself may well end up quite small in the frame, but this doesn't matter as you are trying to put the spider in the context of its environment.

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Spider Photography and Introductory Identification course

Location: Preston Montford, Shropshire
18th–20th September 2015
Sole occupancy £253. Shared occupancy £231.
Non-resident £173.

If you are interested in developing both your spider photography and identification skills, join Alex Hyde and spider expert Lawrence Bee on this unique weekend course run with the FSC. For more details and a chance to see more of Alex's photography, visit www.alexhyde.co.uk/page1

WILDGuides book – images needed!

If you feel inspired to undertake some spider photography, please consider submitting your images for the forthcoming WILDGuide book, *Britain's Spiders*. Ideally images should be suitable for ID purposes, from an angle at which the species can easily be recognised. Please contact Lawrence Bee lawrence.bee16@gmail.com regarding photograph submission.

An Unusual Habitat for *Ero aphana* (Walckenaer, 1802)

by Paul Selden

The mimetid *Ero aphana* was first described in the British fauna by Merrett & Snazell (1975), collected in pitfall traps in June–September the previous year on dry Dorset heathland. Since then, it has been found widely in southern England as far north as Nottinghamshire (<http://srs.britishspiders.org.uk/portal/p/Summary/s/Ero+aphana>), also in dry habitats, and generally in early summer. The species is widespread in the southern regions of mainland Europe (http://www.araneae.unibe.ch/data/190/Ero_aphana).

On Monday June 1st, I was alerted to an arthropod of some sort inside the lid of the jug kettle in the kitchen. This is a glass-sided model (Fig. 1) with a built-in water filter (we live in a hard-water area). It turned out to be a live spider, and was right up beneath the lid, so far from the water surface, but certainly not a dry habitat!

The distinctive spines on the forelegs indicated a mimetid, and the pale colour (Fig. 2) suggested *Ero tuberculata*. However, one cannot go on colour, so an inspection of the palp (it was, fortunately, an adult male) immediately showed it to be *E. aphana*. In this species, the hook-shaped apophysis is turned away from the larger, basal apophysis, rather than towards it as in other species in the genus (Fig. 3). Moreover, *E. tuberculata* is generally a late summer species.

How on Earth did the spider get into the kettle? Well, the weekend before, we were in the Lake District attending the British Arachnological Society AGM weekend. On the Saturday, Rowley Snazell and I were on



Figure 1. Unusual habitat for a spider! A Koenic filter jug kettle (available from good kitchen appliance stores). © Paul Selden.



Figure 2. Habitus of *Ero aphana*, adult male. A particularly pale form. Note the distinctive curved spines on the first two pairs of legs. © Paul Selden.

heathland at Fish House Moss, near Haverthwaite (part of the Roudsea Wood and Mosses National Nature Reserve). Not a particularly dry area, the vegetation there consists of heath vegetation including *Calluna*, cotton grass, bog myrtle, bog rosemary, *Sphagnum*, and such. It is possible that the spider was picked up there on clothing or in a rucksack, from whence it made its way to Buckinghamshire. On the other hand, judging from recent e-mails to the British Spiders list (britishspiders@googlegroups.com), *Ero aphana* does seem to be turning up in a wide variety of habitats. Le Peru (2011) mentioned that it also occurs in moist habitats, and buildings. So it could have come in from anywhere. This is the first record of the species in Bucks, as far as I know, and it could also suggest that the species has spread as far north as Cumbria.



Figure 3. Palps of *Ero aphana*. Note the little, hook-shaped apophysis (arrowed) which curves away from the basal apophysis. © Paul Selden.

References

- Le Peru, B. 2011. The spiders of Europe, synthesis of data. Volume 1: Atypidae to Theridiidae. *Mém. Soc. linn. Lyon*, **2**: 1–266.
- Merrett, P. & Snazell, R. G. 1975. New and rare British spiders. *Bull. Br. arachnol. Soc.*, **3**: 106–112.

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The B.A.S. in 2014: Synopsis of Annual Report

This brief review is based on a fuller report that was presented to the A.G.M. on Friday 29th May 2015, which is available on the Members' Area of the B.A.S. website.

Recording and monitoring

Recording of Britain's arachnids is vital to our understanding of their habitat requirements, as well as their changing abundances and distributions. By the end of 2014, a remarkable 980,000 spider records were held in the S.R.S. database. Between going live in 2010, and December 2014, the S.R.S. website had nearly a quarter of a million visits from over 155,000 users from 169 countries/territories. The relatively new facility for on-line submission of sightings of eight easily recognisable species has generated many additional records: more species will be added in the near future.

The Harvestman Recording Scheme had over 44,000 records by the end of 2014, with species texts due to be added to the website in 2015. The national Pseudoscorpion Recording Scheme database had over 7000 records. Interest in pseudoscorpion recording is expected to be stimulated by the forthcoming completion and publication of an FSC identification chart.

Underpinning conservation

The need for comprehensive and high quality recording is perhaps greatest for species of conservation concern and this year the focus of our Conservation sub-committee has been the completion of a major review, assessing the status of the UK's rarest spiders. Commissioned by the UK government conservation agencies, the review will underpin arachnid conservation from policy to practice; on-line publication is expected in 2015. Our conservation officer is actively involved in Invertebrate Link, a forum established to advance the conservation of UK invertebrates through exchange of information between voluntary and statutory organisations and to develop joint initiatives on strategy, policy, principles and best practice.

Work was continued by B.A.S. members, often in collaboration with other organisations, on the conservation of several national rarities. These included assessing the current distribution of the linyphiid *Midia midas* and the translocation of *Dolomedes plantarius* to a fourth new East-Anglian site as part of a multi-partner project led by Natural England. Collaborative work with Buglife continued on the status of a group of very rare, southern heathland species, under the guidance of Chris Spilling, and on upland rarities by Richard Wilson.

Publications and communications

During the year the Society published Parts 4–6 of Volume 16 of *Arachnology – the Journal of the British Arachnological Society* and numbers 129–131 of the *Newsletter*, incorporating numbers 78–80 of the *Spider Recording Scheme News*. From the beginning of the year new issues of *Arachnology* have been available on the BioOne website (free to B.A.S. members) together with all past issues to Volume 14. Our agreement with BioOne, set up in 2013, provides a world-wide audience of subscribing users and libraries with access to *Arachnology* and also generates income for the Society.