



A NEW SPECIES OF MEGALOMORPH SPIDER *NEOHETEROPHRICTUS* FROM WESTERN GHATS

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ABSTRACT

The Oriental genus *Neoheterophrictus* is endemic to Western Ghats of India and herein a new species collected from Chimmini wildlife sanctuary, *Neoheterophrictus chimminiensis* sp. nov., is described. This raises the number of *Neoheterophrictus* spp. from India to eight.

Key words: *Neoheterophrictus*, Theraphosidae, tarantula, descriptions, illustrations, Chimmini Wildlife Sanctuary, *Neoheterophrictusbhori*.

Theraphosidae Thorell, 1870 is the most diverse of all mygalomorph spider families with 55 species and 11 genera recorded from India so far. The genus *Neoheterophrictus* was established by Siliwal et al. 2012 to accommodate three species namely *Neoheterophrictus crurofulvus* Siliwal, Gupta and Raven (2012); *N. sahyadri* Siliwal, Gupta and Raven (2012) and *N. uttarakannada* Siliwal, Gupta and Raven (2012). The genus is endemic to India with seven species recorded so far from India. *Neoheterophrictus* Siliwal (2012) can be diagnosed from related genera by the multilobed spermathecae in females and double spur in males (Mirza et al. (2014). In this paper, a new species *Neoheterophrictus chimminiensis* sp. nov. from Chimminy Wildlife Sanctuary of Western Ghats, Kerala is described.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The specimens were examined and preserved in 70% alcohol. Measurements are given in mm. Images of the spider were taken with a Canon EOS 600D Digital camera, with EF10mm f/2.8 macro USM. Microphotographs were taken by Canon EOS 600D digital camera attached to a Labomed CZM6 stereozoom microscope using Canon Utility Software. Spermathecae were dissected out and cleared in KOH. Measurements of legs were taken based on left side. Length of palp and leg segments are given as: Femur, patella, tibia, metatarsus (except palp), tarsus, total. Eyes measurements were taken by calibrated ocular micrometer. Claws are not included in the measurement of tarsi. Total body length excludes chelicerae.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Neoheterophrictus chimminiensis, sp.nov. (Fig. 1-13)

Material examined: Holotype, female: DMCK 13/135-1, Chimmini Wildlife sanctuary, 06-Dec-2013, 10.4332°N, 76.461076E, Collected by Sunil Jose K. Paratypes: 1 female, DMCK 13/135-2, DMCK 13/135-3, deposited in Arachnological Collections, Zoology Museum, Deva Matha College, Kuravilangad.

Diagnosis: The new species can be separated by from *Neoheterophrictusbhori* (Gravely, 1915) in the shape of multilobed spermatheca, six lobes are present in *N. bhori* (Mirza et al. (2014) while only four lobes exists in *N. chimminiensis*; besides spermathecal stalks are more closely placed in *N. bhori* than in *N. chimminiensis* (Mirza et al. (2014). The maxillary suture is slightly curved at the end in *N. bhori* while it is straight in *N. chimminiensis*. *N. bhori* possesses minute setae below the maxillary suture, which is absent in *N. chimminiensis*.

Measurements: Total length: 22.35 long. Carapace 8.65 long, 6.94 wide. Chelicerae 4.83 long; abdomen, 13.41 long, 7.65 wide. Spinnerets: PMS 0.88 long, 0.31 wide, 0.14 apart. PLS 3.3 total length (1.29 basal, 0.73 middle, 1.4 apical, mid width 0.59, 0.48, 0.4 respectively). Morphometry of legs and palp. Legs: I-6.68, 4.44, 4.94, 3.25, 2.31, 21.62; II-5.75, 3.75, 3.56, 3.25, 2.57, 18.32; III-5.06, 3.06, 3.19, 3.56, 2.56, 17.43; IV-7.19, 3.88, 5.31, 3.56, 3.25, 25.82; Palp-4.32. 2.71, 2.92, 6.19, 2.38, 12.33.

