



An annotated list of arachnid species newly recorded for Fair Isle, in their regional context

by J. Edward Milner¹ and N. Riddiford² (9388)

¹ 80 Western Park, London N8 9TB.

² Schoolton, Fair Isle, Shetland ZE2 9JU.

References to records from Faroes, Iceland, Greenland, western Fennoscandia are those quoted by Ashmole (1979) from Brandegaard, Holm, Bengtson, Hauge and others unless otherwise stated. Other authors whose records are quoted are Duffey (1955), Surtees (1976), Hillyard (1977), Drummond (1981) for Orkney, Bristowe (1932) for the earliest records from both Orkney and Shetland, and Bengtson & Hauge (1979) for the Faroes; Eskov (1994) for Siberian records of Linyphiids.

The letters after the entry for each species indicate presence in the following northern territories: S = Shetland (mainland); O = Orkney; F = Faroes; I = Iceland; G = Greenland; WF = Western Fennoscandia; NS = Northern Siberia.

Months for males and females refer to Fair Isle findings (all methods of capture) unless otherwise indicated. Months given in *italics* were found to be clearly the peak months.

* = new record for Fair Isle

** = new record for Shetland (and Fair Isle)

Family GNAPHOSIDAE

Drassodes sp. prob. *lapidosus**

Ashmole (1979) reported a sub-adult male from Shetland. In this study a single sub-adult male was taken in grass near the north end of the island and identified as probably *Drassodes* sp. by Dr Peter Merrett. However there are no records from islands further north. S(?): WF.

*Haplodrassus signifer**

Ashmole (1979) reported two immature spiders probably referable to this species from the Shetland mainland. In this study a number of adult specimens were taken at site C (15m) in dense *Calluna*, and at the top of the Gulley at about 15m asl. Males: June, July. Females: July. S: F, I, G, WF.

*Pardosa nigriceps**

Only a single (male) specimen was taken, in a pitfall trap at site C in July. According to Ashmole its occurrence in Shetland is generally rather local; it was first reported by Bristowe but there are only three other records, all in June or July. S, O: WF.

*Xerolycosa miniata***

This is clearly one of the most interesting new records, as it has not previously been recorded north of the Scottish mainland. In this study a single male was taken at site E, and four males were found in The Gulley, all in June 1988, while 26 males were taken at site E in August 1990. WF(?).

*Alopecosa pulverulenta**

A number of specimens (all males) were taken at site E and at The Gulley in June and July 1988 and August 1990. There are two records (both immature specimens) for Shetland according to Ashmole where it has occurred up to 290m, while on the Scottish mainland it has been recorded up to 1000m. S, O: F, WF.

*P. tenuitarsis***

Two females from site F, one in August 1989 and the other in October 1990 were identified as *P. tenuitarsis*, a close relative of *P. piraticus*. This is a new record for Shetland, but the species is very similar to *P. piraticus* and may have been overlooked in the past on Fair Isle and on Shetland. WF(?).

*Habnia nava***

Not recorded by Ashmole on Shetland but in this study it was found to be quite common in The Gulley. This appears to be the northernmost record of the species. Males: April-June; females: March, April, August. WS.

Family LYNPHIIDAE*Walckenaeria antica**

Ashmole took a single male on the dunes at Quendale in April. In this study *W. antica* was found up to the summit of Ward Hill, and at all the trap sites except F, although in small numbers. Males: September to January; females: June, July, September, October. S, O: F, WF, NS.

*W. clavicornis**

This montane/arctic species (which occurs further north as far as Greenland) apparently occurs only above 200m on Fair Isle (where it is fairly common); elsewhere in Shetland the only confirmed records are for 230m upwards. Males: April, May, June, August, September; females: May, July and October. S, O: F, I, G, WF, NS.

*W. cuspidata***

This species has not been recorded for the mainland of Shetland although it is now known from both Orkney and the Faroes so it is most likely to be present. During this study a single male was taken in The Gulley in September. S, O: F, WF, NS.

*W. vigilax***

This species has not previously been recorded from any islands north of the Scottish mainland. In this study four individuals were taken in June and July – males from sites A, B and E, and a female from site E. O, WF, NS.

*Metopobactrus prominulus***

This species has not been recorded on the mainland of Shetland, or further north, but it has been recorded by the author from Orkney (Milner, 1988). In this study six males were taken in June and July at site E. O, WF, NS.

*Peponocranium ludicrum***

A single male was taken at site E in May and a female in The Gulley in July. O: WF.

*Trichopterna thorelli***

Not recorded so far from the mainland of Shetland. During this study a number of specimens of both sexes were taken at site E in June and July. O, WF(?).

*Silometopus elegans**

This spider occurs in small numbers at all altitudes on Fair Isle; it was one of the few species which was taken in traps at all sites. *S. elegans* has been found at three sites on the mainland of Shetland by Ashmole and the author; females in April and July, and males in September. On Fair Isle both sexes: June to August. S, O, WF, NS.

*Cnephalocotes obscurus***

Not recorded from the mainland of Shetland although it is known from both Iceland and Greenland, *C. obscurus* was found during this study at site E and in another marshy area at about 150m. Males: June and July; females: June, July and September. S, O, I, G, WF, NS.

*Tiso vagans**

Recorded from a number of places on the mainland of Shetland, and also from the Faroes, this species was taken on a number of occasions at The Gulley. Males: June, July, November; females: March, April, September. S, O, F, WF.

*Moncephalus castaneipes**

Reported by Ashmole from various sites at low altitudes on the mainland of Shetland, this species is common near the summit of Ward Hill frequently occurring in catches at sites A and B. Males: March to September; females: March to November. S, WF.

*Lophomma punctatum***

This species was not recorded by Ashmole from Shetland, but the author found a single female at Tingwall in August 1987, and in this study it occurred fairly frequently at site F and once at site E. It was also taken in damp areas up to 160m on Ward Hill. Males: April, May, July, September; females: June, July, September. S, O, WF, NS.

*Gongylidiellum vivum**

Ashmole reports a few records from the mainland of Shetland; in this study it occurred fairly frequently at sites E and F and a single individual was taken at site A (215m). Males: June to September and November; females: January, March, April, July, August, September.

*Erigonella hiemalis**

Ashmole reports only two records at low altitudes on the mainland of Shetland. In this study three males were taken at site B (200m) in April and May; females were taken at lower altitudes in February and July. S, O, WF.

[Diplocephalus cristatus]

A single female that was confirmed as this species has been found elsewhere in Shetland, and a record for Fair Isle previously reported by the writer should be discarded as an error. However, it is known from Orkney, Faroes, Iceland and similar localities in the southern hemisphere. This ubiquitous species is most likely to be present in Fair Isle, but no confirmed specimens have yet been recorded. S, O: F, I, WF.

*Araeoncus crassiceps**

Ashmole has reported this species from a number of Shetland localities; in this study two males and one female were taken, at site E in July. S, O, WF.

*Typhochrestus digitatus**

Known only from one locality on the mainland of Shetland (both sexes in April), in this study *T. digitatus* occurred at all sites except F, down to about 20m, and was common at site A in particular from December to January. Males: November to March; females: February, March and May. S, O, WF.

*Drepanotylus uncatus**

Ashmole reported a single record on the mainland of Shetland from a damp patch of grass and sedge; in this study it was found to be common, sometimes abundant at the site F (wet sphagnum) even though this was at 125m. It was also trapped at site E. *D. uncatus* is at least partly winter-active; most males were taken in winter months; this



may explain Ashmole's paucity of records, and its apparent absence from Orkney. Males: January to May, September to November; females: April to November, January. S, F, I, WF.

*Leptothrix (Phaulothrix) bardyi**

Like the last species this is winter-active (as Ashmole points out) and he did not find it in his studies but gives a single record from the Out Skerries. In this study it was found to be fairly common at sites A and C, though strangely was not taken at site B. All records were from September to March with a peak in November-December. S, I, WF.

*Halorates reprobus**

This is a widespread species on the shoreline of Shetland, which has also been recorded from Iceland, although not so far from Orkney. On Fair Isle it has been found near the south end on shingle and among tidal debris, and probably occurs at sheltered points on the shoreline elsewhere. Males and females: September. S, I, WF.

*Agyneta decora**

Uncommon in Shetland generally which is strange as it was found to be abundant in June and July at sites A and B near the summit of Ward Hill, and occurring less frequently at all the other sites. Males: June to September and November; females: June to September, S, O, F, I, WF.

*Meioneta mossica***

This species has recently been separated as a new species from *Meioneta saxatilis* (Schikora, 1993). Elsewhere in Shetland "*M. saxatilis*" was recorded once by Ashmole but all recent specimens from Orkney and specimens found in this study at site E (at 70m) proved to be the new species. The specimens were all taken between June and October. S, WF.

*Centromerus prudens**

Ashmole recorded this species in April from above 150m on Ronas Hill and Sandness Hill. The only summer records are from Noss (Bristowe 1932) and by Goodier (1974) from 400m on Foula in July. In this study it was found down to almost sea level in The Gulley, but also up to the summit of Ward Hill (site A), with site C being the site where it was most commonly taken. Males: September to November, January; females: September to May.

*C. dilutis***

Not recorded from the mainland of Shetland, but recorded by Bengtson & Hauge (1979) from Faroes. In this study a single female was taken near the north end of the island in July. F, WF.

*Centromerita bicolor**

Elsewhere in Shetland this "facultative montane" species (Ashmole 1979) has only been found in grassy areas at low altitudes. In this study it was taken, sometimes in large numbers, up to the summit of Ward Hill. The largest catch was at site B in February 1991 after the main study period when 134 males and 28 females were taken in a single month's trapping. This is a winter-active species with males taken mostly in February but also in October and December; females: February to May and September to December. S, O, SM: F, I, G, WF. (Bengtson & Hauge reported this species from Faroes, but subsequently corrected this to *C. concinna*.) S, O, F, WF.

C. concinna

Not a new record, but by far the most abundant and frequently trapped species in the pitfall catches (making up 43% of the aggregate catch for the four main sites), especially at sites A, B and C; less frequent or abundant at E and F. On the mainland of Shetland it has been recorded in April and in late summer at a few sites including near the summit of Ronas Hill (450M). However, as this study shows, this is a winter-active species with adults being absent in most of the summer months and as nearly all spider records for Shetland are from April or the summer months, its distribution is certainly under-recorded. Its occurrence in the winter months as found in this study is spectacular, producing peaks in the trapping figures considerably greater than the numbers of all species in the summer months. Males: September to April; females: all year but only occasionally in the summer months. S, O, F, WF.

*Bathyphantes parvulus***

Easily confused with the previous species and probably under-recorded. A few males have been taken from three different sites, all in September, but none in the pitfall traps. WF.

*Bolyphantes luteolus**

Ashmole reports that few adults of this species have been found in Shetland. In this study it was found to show the typical pattern of a winter-active species with a peak of numbers in December and January. It was taken at sites B, C and E and by searching (in September) from near sea-level to the summit of Ward Hill. Males: November to March; females: August to March. S, O, F, WF.