



## The smaller arachnid orders: diversity, descriptions and distributions from Linnaeus to the present (1758 to 2007)\*

MARK S. HARVEY

Department of Terrestrial Zoology, Western Australian Museum, Locked Bag 49, Welshpool DC, Western Australia 6986, Australia;  
mark.harvey@museum.wa.gov.au.

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### Abstract

Carolus Linnaeus' contribution to the study of the smaller arachnid orders was modest with the description of four taxa: the pseudoscorpions *Acarus cancroides* and *A. scorpioides*, the whip scorpion *Phalangium caudatum*, and the whip spider *P. reniforme*. Since then, more than 5,100 species have been named in eight orders by a plethora of researchers. Trends in species descriptions over time are explored; the presence of different accumulation curves for some orders is thought to be due to advances in the study of morphology combined with a greater focus on collecting small arachnids in tropical ecoregions. Pseudoscorpion species richness is examined against log-transformed area data for all countries of the world. Anomalies, such as the poor representation of pseudoscorpion diversity in some large countries such as China, appear to be due to a low number of active researchers.

**Key words:** Arachnida, Opilioacariformes, Ricinulei, Palpigradi, Uropygi, Amblypygi, Schizomida, Solifugae, Pseudoscorpiones, richness, systematics

### Introduction

The starting point of zoological nomenclature commenced with the 10<sup>th</sup> edition of *Systema Naturae* by Carolus Linnaeus published in 1758. The only work deemed to have preceded this publication was by his contemporary Carl A. Clerck who named many Swedish spiders (Clerck 1758). Despite several arachnological works claiming the date of this publication as 1757, the International Commission for Zoological Nomenclature has