



A new species of *Hersilia* Audouin, 1826 (Araneae: Hersiliidae) from India, with notes on its natural history

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Abstract

A new species of *Hersilia* Audouin, *H. orvakalensis* **sp. nov.**, is described from Andhra Pradesh, India. The taxonomic affinities of the species are discussed and a brief note on its natural history is provided.

Key words: Long-spinnered bark spider, common two-tailed spider, *Hersilia*, India

Introduction

Hersilia Audouin, 1826 is the largest and most diverse genus in the family Hersiliidae, with 72 described species (Platnick 2010) distributed in the Afrotropical, Oriental and Australian Regions. Hersiliid spiders are popularly known as Long-Spinnered Bark Spiders or Common Two-Tailed Spiders. They are easily recognized by the flattened body, raised eye region, the bi-articulations on the metatarsi of legs I, II and IV, the extremely long posterior spinnerets and by the legs that are stretched out radially on tree bark or lichen-covered crags (Baehr and Baehr 1993; Chen 1994; Foord and Dippenaar-Schoeman 2005, 2006; Rheims and Brescovit 2004). Knowledge of the natural history of *Hersilia* is still rudimentary, although most species are cryptic and remain ad-pressed on the substrate when at rest, moving at great speed when disturbed (Dippenaar-Schoeman and Jocqué 1997).

In India, the genus *Hersilia* is represented by three species: *H. savignyi* Lucas, 1836, *H. sumatrana* (Thorell, 1890) and *H. tibialis* Baehr & Baehr, 1993. *Hersilia savignyi* is the only species known from the State of Andhra Pradesh. Historically, Indian hersiliid taxonomy has received little attention except for a revision of Hersiliidae from the Oriental Region by Baehr and Baehr (1993) and an additional recent paper by Javed and Tampal (2010). The current paper is based on an examination of specimens collected during a recent biodiversity inventory conducted by the World Wide Fund for Nature-India (WWF-India), Andhra Pradesh State Office (APSO). *Hersilia orvakalensis* **sp. nov.** is described and compared with all known species.

Material and methods

Terminology for the male pedipalp and genitalia follows Rheims and Brescovit (2004), Foord and Dippenaar-Schoeman (2006) and Marusik and Fet (2009), while measurements were taken as per Chen (1994) and Rheims and Brescovit (2004). All measurements are in millimeters and taken with digital callipers and an ocular micrometer with up to 50x magnification. Photographs of specimens were taken with a Sony Cyber-shot (DSC-W120) digital camera mounted directly on the eye piece of an Olympus SZX 12 stereomicroscope.