

The male of *Marengo nitida* with the description of *M. rattotensis* new species from Sri Lanka (Araneae: Salticidae)

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Abstract

Systematics of *Marengo nitida* Simon, 1900 is discussed and *M. rattotensis* new species is described. The female of *M. nitida* is described for the first time. *M. rattotensis* is diagnosed by the unique shape of its retrolateral tibial apophysis. *M. nitida* can be separated from other *Marengo* spp. by the rounded shape of its opisthosoma, and males by the characteristic retrolateral tibial apophysis. The genus *Marengo* now contains six species with most of them known only from Sri Lanka.

Key words: Ballinae, biodiversity, jumping spiders, *Marengo*, Sri Lanka

Introduction

The case of *Marengo nitida* Simon, 1900 is a fascinating example of how the comparative study of newly collected material and museum holdings facilitates species hypotheses testing. *Marengo nitida* was first described and illustrated based on a single male specimen. Its only illustration, a rare case of an illustration by E. Simon, shows a spider that has a rounded opisthosoma (Simon 1901: fig 574a). Since the initial description of *M. nitida* two revisionary studies of the genus *Marengo* were undertaken (Wanless 1978; Benjamin 2004). However, as new specimens were never found, both authors were compelled to rely on original specimen for the redescription of *M. nitida*. The lack of new evidence in the form of new material to test the species hypothesis led to the justified questioning of its validity (Wanless 1978). However, Benjamin (2004) reexamined the original type specimen of *M. nitida* and new material of its sister species *M. crassipes* G. & E. Peckham, 1892 collected from the type locality and concluded the validity of *M. nitida*.

Recent examination of collections of the National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution, revealed a small collection of *M. nitida* from a location previously