



Huntsman spiders (Araneae: Sparassidae) from Xishuangbanna Rainforest, China

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Abstract

An extensive faunal survey of spiders from Xishuangbanna was carried out over one year (July 2006–August 2007) using various collecting techniques (ground pitfall traps, trunk pitfall traps, fogging and hand collecting). Three known Sparassidae species were collected: *Heteropoda tetrica* Thorell, 1897, *Pseudopoda songi* Jäger, 2008, and *Pseudopoda namkhan* Jäger, Pathoumthong & Vedel, 2006, the latter reported for the first time from China. *Thelcticopis zhengi* **sp. nov.** is described and illustrated based on males and females. All specimens are deposited in the Institute of Zoology, Chinese Academy of Sciences in Beijing (IZCAS) and Research Institute Senckenberg in Frankfurt am Main (SMF).

Key words: Taxonomy, fauna, new species, new record, Yunnan

Introduction

The rainforest in Xishuangbanna prefecture represents a transition from tropical to subtropical forest. It harbours more species diversity than typical tropical rain forests of Southeast Asia (Zhu *et al.* 2006), and is therefore a key area in biogeography and a hotspot for biodiversity (Myers 1988). Nevertheless, since the 1960s, Xishuangbanna suffered from a certain anthropogenic influence and a loss of multifaceted landscape by monocropping. Natural forest cover has decreased dramatically from 63% to 34% (Yan & Chen 1992). Extensive exotic rubber plantations have been established, causing a significant loss of indigenous rainforest habitats and leading towards irreversible damage to its local ecological environment. The increased destruction of natural habitats by humans has intensified the need for registering biodiversity data to support conservation and management decisions (Sørensen 2004).

Spiders are among the most diverse and abundant invertebrate predators in terrestrial ecosystems (Wise 1993, Nyffeler 2000). An extensive faunal survey focused on spiders from Xishuangbanna over one year (July 2006–August 2007) using various collecting techniques (ground pitfall traps, trunk pitfall traps, canopy fogging and hand collecting). It was carried out by colleagues from the Chinese Academy of Sciences. In the present paper we report on the spider family Sparassidae. This group is mainly known as large hunting spiders, living on tree bark, in shrub leaves, rock crevices or in synanthropic habitats, which may play an important role in ecosystems. The survey yielded four Sparassidae species, one of which is new to science and herein described.

Material and methods

Specimens were examined using an Olympus SZ40 stereomicroscope. Further details were studied under an Olympus BX41 compound microscope. All illustrations were made using a drawing tube and inked on ink jet