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First Record of the Social Spider *Cyrtophora* *citricola* (Araneae: Araneidae) in the Bahamas

Christopher K. Starr and Jo-Anne N. Sewlal

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First Record of the Social Spider *Cyrtophora citricola* (Araneae: Araneidae) in the Bahamas

Cyrtophora citricola (Forskål) constructs a compound web in which the horizontal webs of the many individual spiders are interconnected (Buskirk 1975). It is native to the Old World (Levi 1997), but introduced by unknown means to several Neotropical territories, including the Dominican Republic (Alayón *et al.* 2001), Haiti (Starr 2005) and Cuba (Alayón 2003). We report here for the first time its presence in the Bahamas.

On 1 January, 2011, with the dry season already well underway, we found a series of aggregations of this species on Great Inagua. This island, at the southeastern end of the Bahamas chain, has an area of 1544 km², a dry climate (annual rainfall about 1000 mm) and relatively low vegetation (few trees above three metres).

The aggregations were on both sides of a country road through more or less natural habitat near the saline Lake Windsor (21°04'N, 73°34'W). All but two compound webs were on nearly leafless *Lycium americanum* (Solanaceae). This low, relatively dense shrub has narrow branches (diameter about 3 mm) without thorns. The silk was concentrated on the outside of the shrubs, with much less in the interior. The nearly leafless state of the shrubs was more likely a seasonal phenomenon than the result of blockage of photosynthesis due to the silk, as this did not seem very dense, and we noted the same condition in most *L. americanum* without webs.

Our search revealed 20 aggregations, all at the sides of the road. Almost all had an estimated volume of 0.5 m³ or less (Table 1). The single exception (no. 3) extended for about three meters parallel to the road. Consistent with previous observations of this species in the Neotropics, the population was concentrated in a particular area, the two limits separated by about 141 m. We did not find *C. citricola* elsewhere in the island, nor had our ecotourist guide, Colin Ingraham.

We observed three other spiders in association with *C. citricola* webs: one individual each of *Leucauge argyra* (Tetragnathidae) and *Nephila clavipes* (Nephilidae) on the periphery and several of *Argyrodes elevatus* in the interior. Members of these genera have previously been reported in association with *C. citricola* (Leborgne *et al.* 1998; Rypstra 1979).

Mr. Ingraham led us to a place about 50 m beyond the last aggregation where he had noted two larger compound webs some months before, but there was no sign of either. This agrees with our impression of instability in aggregations of other Neotropical spiders such as *Anelosimus eximius*, *A. rupununi*, *Nephila clavipes* and *Philoponella republicana*. In our experience, even aggregations of hun-

drreds of individuals can vanish over just a few weeks.

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Table 1. Enumeration of a series of 20 compound webs of the spider *Cyrtophora citricola* in Great Inagua, Bahamas. All figures are by visual estimation. "Other side" indicates a position more or less directly across on the other side of the road.

Number	Volume	Distance from Preceding Web
1	0.5 m ³	--
2	<0.5 m ³	other side
3	1.5 m ³	32 m
4	0.5 m ³	<1 m
5	<0.5 m ³	5 m
6	<<0.5 m ³	other side
7	<<0.5 m ³	1 m from no. 5
8	0.5 m ³	3 m
9	<<0.5 m ³	5 m
10	<0.5 m ³	23 m
11	a few liters	1 m
12	<<0.5 m ³	1 m
13	<<0.5 m ³	other side
14	<<0.5 m ³	1 m
15	<<0.5 m ³	1 m
16	<<0.5 m ³	1 m
17	<<0.5 m ³	5 m
18	<<0.5 m ³	3 m
19	a few liters	58 m
20	a few liters	1 m

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Christopher K. Starr¹ and Jo-Anne N. Sewlal²

Dep't. of Life Sciences, Univ. of the West Indies,
St. Augustine, Trinidad and Tobago.

1. ckstarr@gmail.com

2. joannesewlal@gmail.com