

that both the webs belonged to *S. sarasinorum* (Sebastian and Peter 2009). *S. sarasinorum* is one of three permanently cooperative species of the genus *Stegodyphus*, and is distributed in India, Sri Lanka, Nepal, and Myanmar (Platnick 2013). It is frequently accompanied by spiders belonging to Salticidae, Arenidae, and Gnaphosidae families (G. Vankhede pers. comm.). The Tawny Costers were probably present in large numbers at the site due to the abundance of flowers of *Passiflora foetida*, one of their favoured host plants. Other than the Tawny Coster, Small Salmon Arab *Colotis amata*,

Common Grass Yellow *Eurema hecabe*, Plain Tiger *Danaus chrysippus*, Striped Tiger *Danaus genutia*, and Common Gull *Cepora nerissa* were also found in abundance at the site.

Although butterflies form a considerable part of the diet of genus *Stegodyphus* (Bradoo 1980; Willey and Jackson 1993), such unusual incidents of capture and collection of individuals belonging to a single species is rare, and thus is worth recording. The possible reason why only this species of butterfly, among the others seen in the area, was caught in the web is interesting and also puzzling.

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12. HETEROPODA FISCHERI JÄGER, 2005: A HUNTSMAN SPIDER HUNTING ON FELLOW CAVERNICOLES IN THE CAVES OF MEGHALAYA, INDIA

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Huntsman spiders, members of the family Sparassidae, are carnivorous, feeding mostly on insects and other invertebrates (Harries *et al.* 2008; Nyffeler and Symondson 2001; Wise 1993); they hunt by pouncing on the prey and killing it with the venom injected. It seems a natural transition for such a group of small predators to gravitate toward subterranean habitats where they have access to easily available prey (Biswas 2010).

Heteropoda fischeri, a species of huntsman spider, was first identified from the caves of Jaintia Hills, Meghalaya (Jäger 2005), and later from other caves of the region (Biswas and Harries 2011; Harries *et al.* 2008). Early reports document *H. fischeri* preying upon brown Rhabdiphorid cave crickets in the Jaintia Hills (Harries *et al.* 2008) and other caves in Meghalaya. Predator-prey relationships between Rhabdiphorid crickets and huntsman spiders were later also reported from other areas (Biswas and Shrotriya 2011; Culver and White 2005; Gunn 2004).

Meghalaya has vast tracts of limestone deposits up to a depth of 500 m. The combination of significant limestone deposits and high rainfall have produced several water carved subterranean caves of notable length and depth here, though

only a fraction of these have been explored and mapped. Even among the caves explored, biospeleological surveys have been limited (Biswas 2009; Biswas and Harries 2011; Disney 2009; Harries *et al.* 2008; Kottelat *et al.* 2007). As part of International Cave Expedition – 2011, organised by Meghalaya Adventurers Association, India, we explored a few caves in the Pala range of Jaintia Hills district, Meghalaya. Most of these caves were river caves and reflect the same biotic components which have been previously reported by Harries *et al.* (2008). We found the initial shallow corridors of almost all the caves to be occupied by some species of Pulmonata (snails and slugs), besides other cavernicolous organisms such as crickets, spiders, and harvestmen. During the trip to the Hostage Cave, we witnessed an interesting predator-prey relationship involving a huntsman spider and slug, which is discussed in this note.

Hostage Cave (25° 25' 22.6" N; 92° 35' 05.7" E), is a small subterranean cave that opens through a narrow and twisted opening. The twilight and transitional zones of this cave are quite shallow in nature, whereas the inner passageway is more of a substantial river conduit. The water-swept side-walls of the cave suggest that most parts of the cave associated with the river remain submerged during the rains. During one

of our visits to the cave, we saw an unidentified pulmonate slug moving on the wall of the cave that was being targeted by the huntsman spider *Heteropoda fischeri*. The spider grabbed the slug, and on this, the slug tried to escape by expanding and contracting its body, but it was apparent that the spider's venom was paralyzing the slug. Finally the prey was rendered paralyzed, and the spider started masticating at a slime-free part of its body.

Slugs have been reported as prey of several invertebrate species, including beetles, centipedes and harvestmen (Breure 2011; Symondson 2004). A recent review by Nyffeler and

Symondson (2001) reported 12 Araneae families to be among the 53 reported predators of snails and slugs. However, ours is the first report of predation by a spider on a pulmonate slug in a hypogean ecosystem.

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13. A STEP FURTHER TO THE CORRECT IDENTIFICATION OF *CEROPEGIA BULBOSA* ROXB. IN KACHCHH, GUJARAT, INDIA

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Introduction

Ceropegia Linn. is one of the most fascinating genera in the milkweed family (Asclepiadaceae) and has variable and highly unusual flowers. *Ceropegia* is derived from 'keros' meaning wax, and 'pege' meaning fountain, as the flowers are said to look like a fountain of wax. They are twining, rarely erect herbs, glabrous, rarely pubescent, with tubers. Leaves membranous or fleshy, at times reduced. Flowers sessile or pedunculate, solitary to many-flowered in sub-umbellate cyme, and seeds comose (Jagtap and Singh

1999). Asclepiadaceae is characterised by bicarpellary, syncarpous, superior ovary (Santapau and Irani 1960) and its specialised corolla (Jagtap *et al.* 2004). The family is well-known for endemism – the most elaborate and complicated flower among all dicots – and for contrivances for pollination (Kamble and Yadav 2004).

Intensive survey of *Ceropegia* spp. was done for three years in Kachchh – the northernmost district of Gujarat. In past studies from Gujarat, *Ceropegia bulbosa* Roxb. was classified up to species level. The present manuscript deals