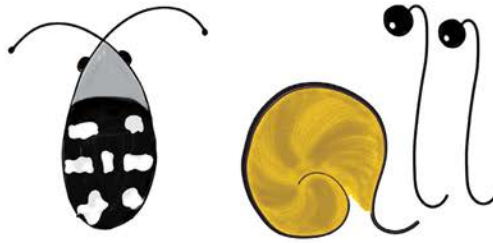




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## New records of the tarantula *Haploclastus nilgirinus* sharing microhabitats

On our regular field visit on 17 July 2025 at 1332 h (11.320° N, 76.792° E) we observed *Raorchestes signatus* commonly known as the Star-eyed Bush Frog, a rhacophorid, resting inside a tree hollow of *Celtis tetrandra*. We were amazed to see that just above the tree hollow we noted the presence of the wood burrow of a juvenile *Haploclastus nilgirinus* (Pocock, 1899) a mygalomorph under the family Theraphosidae, whose burrow was internally connected to the hollow.

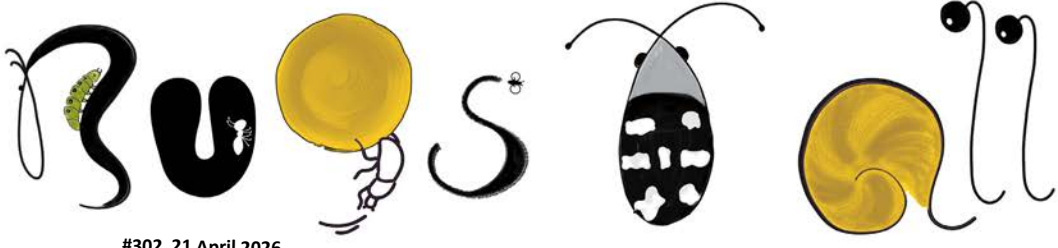


Burrow of *Haploclastus nilgirinus* (Left) and *Raorchestes signatus* (Right) just below sharing the microhabitat in *Celtis tetrandra*. © Rishi Kesavan & Elangovan Vignesh.

The following month on 8 August 2025 at 1426 h (11.320° N, 76.801° E), we observed a juvenile Rock Agama *Psammophilus dorsalis* Gray, 1831 and an adult *H. nilgirinus* in close proximity, sharing the tree cavities on an *Acacia mearnsii* tree (burrows not connected), with the *H. nilgirinus* retreating into its burrow upon our approach. The next month on 14 September 2025 at 1221 h (11.334° N, 76.802° E), we



*Bipalium* sp sharing the burrow of adult *Haploclastus nilgirinus*. on the tree *Vernonia arborea*. © Rishi Kesavan.



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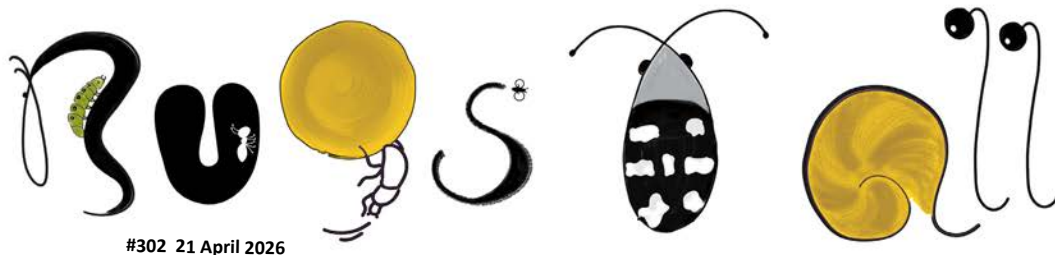
Burrow of *Haploclastus nilgirinus* (Left) and *Psammophilus dorsalis* (Right) sharing the microhabitat tree cavity in *Acacia mearnsii*. © Rishi Kesavan.

noted that a juvenile tarantula parasitized by the Mesostigmata. On 05 April 2026 at 2357h (11.34895° N, 76.81182° E), we observed the *Bipalium* sp. sharing the burrow of an adult *H. nilgirinus* on the tree *Vernonia arborea*.

Globally, numerous instances of symbiosis have been documented, which is extensively revised by Zamani et al. (2024) and reported association across 17 countries in different sub families of theraphosids such as Theraphosinae, Harpactirinae, Thrigmopoeinae, Poecilotheriinae, Ischnocolinae, Aviculariinae, Selenocosmiinae, and Psalmopoeinae with anuran families such as Leptodactylidae, Bufonidae, Microhylidae, Craugastoridae, Strabomantidae, Hylidae, Dendrobatidae, and Eleutherodactylidae and with snakes, and several invertebrates such as whip spiders, ants, and termites. In India notable examples include



Parasitism of Mesostigmata mites on *Haploclastus nilgirinus*. © Rishi Kesavan.



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commensalism between *Poecilotheria hanumavilasumica* Smith, 2004 and *Uperodon taprobanicus* Parker, 1934 (Siliwal & Ravichandran 2008), association between *Poecilotheria rufilata* Pocock, 1899 with *Oecophylla smaragdina* Fabricius, 1775 and an unidentified species of *Microhyla* Tschudi, 1838 entering the burrow of *Haploclastus kayi* Gravely, 1915 (Siliwal & Ravichandran 2008; Zamani et al. 2024).

Furthermore, commensalism between *Haploclastus nilgirinus* and the Triangular Spotted Frog *Uperodon triangularis* was reported by Abinesh & Moinudheen (2024) from the Nilgiris. Sympatry between *Cnemaspis* sp. and *Dravidogecko* sp. (now identified as *Dravidogecko coonoor*; Abinesh et al. 2025) along with *H. nilgirinus*, during which the spider was observed capturing a *Cnemaspis* sp. individual and retreating into its burrow.

Association between mites and spider dates back at least 50 million years ago from Baltic amber fossil evidence (Wunderlich 2004; Dunlop et al. 2012; Masan et al. 2012), since then numerous studies such as those by (Durkin et al. 2021) and (Hernández-Corral & Moraza 2025) have continued to explore this association. This study is first of its kind reporting the spatial microhabitat sharing between *H. nilgirinus* with *Raorchestes signatus*, *Psammophilus dorsalis* and *Bipalium* sp. and parasitized by Mesostigmata. Future studies should be carried out and should focus on long term ecological and behavioral aspects.

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