

RANGE EXTENSION OF *PLATYTHOMISUS SUDEEPI* BISWAS, 1977 (ARANEAE: THOMISIDAE)

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web supplement

The genus *Platythomisus* is represented by 14 species globally and known to occur in Africa and Indomalayan region. This genus is very rare in occurrence and is poorly studied. Most of the species were described in late 19th century or early 20th century and known only from type localities except for a few Indian and African species. So far, only two species, *Platythomisus bazarus* Tikader, 1970 and *Platythomisus sudeepi* Biswas, 1977 have been reported from India. *P. bazarus* is known only from type locality, which is Nayarbazar in western Sikkim.

Platythomisus sudeepi Biswas, 1977 is a rare spider and it has only been reported from two localities in Karnataka. It was first described by Biswas (1977) based on two females, collected from Pollibeta, Coorg district, Karnataka (14°28'N & 74°20'E) (Specimens are deposited in Zoological Survey of India, Calcutta, Regd. No. 4411/18). Recently it was reported for the second time nearly after 25 years since its description by Bastawade *et al.* (2004) based on a photograph from Castle Rock, North Kanara, Karnataka (15°12'N & 75°80'E). The distance between the first and second localities is about 300km.

On 23 July 2002, we sighted a bright red crab-spider on grass adjacent to an unpaved trek path, behind the Vice Chancellor's guest-house in Kerala Agriculture University Campus, Mannuthy, Thrissur, Kerala (10°34'N & 76°20'E). The spider was found resting in its nest, which was made between two grass blades that was glued together with silk. On separating the grass blade we found the red coloured spider with four black dots on the cephalothorax and three black bands on the abdomen. Based on its body colouration and pattern we gave it a common name 'Three-striped Red Crab-spider'. The spider was collected after taking photographs in its natural habitat and preserved in 70% alcohol. On examining the specimen (Images 1 & 2^w) under a stereomicroscope, it was confirmed as *Platythomisus sudeepi* Biswas, 1977. The specimen (Voucher no. WILD-Spi-02-17) is deposited at Wildlife Information & Liaison Development, Coimbatore.

This female specimen collected by us differs from the original description in colouration, size and shape of dots and bands. In the present specimen anterior and posterior black spots on the cephalothorax are almost of the same size and a pair of eyes are situated outside the anterior black spots. Whereas, in the type specimen the posterior spots are described as larger than

anterior ones and all four pairs of eyes located within the anterior black spots. The abdominal bands in our specimen were not much curved like in the type specimen. Femur of all the legs is pearly white, whereas in the original description only legs III and IV are light yellow in colour. The colour variation in the type specimen is likely due to preservation and that the original description is based on preserved specimen. Total body length of our specimen is 7.5mm, whereas that of the type specimen is 9.31mm. Leg measurements of WILD-Spi-02-17 specimen are given in Table 1; Leg formula is II>I>IV>III.

The present record extends the known range of *Platythomisus sudeepi* Biswas, 1977 to the south of Palghat Gap by 200km south of the type locality in Karnataka. Also the present record of this rare spider from Thrissur makes it the first record for Kerala.

REFERENCES

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Table 1. Morphometry of legs (in mm) of *Platythomisus sudeepi* Biswas, 1977 from Thrissur, Kerala (WILD-Spi-02-17).

	I	II	III	IV
Coxa	0.4	0.5	0.7	0.8
Trochanter	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2
Femur	3.8	4.1	2.2	2.8
Patella	1.2	1.2	0.8	0.8
Tibia	3.7	3.7	1.9	2.1
Metatarsus	2.1	2.1	1.0	0.9
Tarsus	1.6	1.6	1.1	0.9
Total	13.0	13.4	7.9	8.5

^w see images of *Platythomisus sudeepi* in the web supplement at www.zoosprint.org

