

Scientific note

Unusual observation of a whip spider in Germany

(Arachnida, Amblypygi)

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The order Amblypygi Thorell, 1876 is almost entirely absent from Europe, being hardly represented there by the single species *Charinus ioanniticus* (Kritscher, 1959), which has been found in the southern Aegean islands of Rhodes and Kos (Weygoldt 2005); both islands belong politically to Greece, but are actually offshore Asiatic Turkey. Whether these insular populations are native or introduced is still unclear: according to Weygoldt (2005), this whip spider is widespread across the eastern Mediterranean region (additional occurrences were confirmed from Turkey, Israel and Egypt), but all known populations occur in or around human settlements.

Due to its far-north location, Germany has no native whip spiders and even more, not a single record has ever been published on accidental introduction of species of this arachnid order. That's why we became surprised when we received two colour photos of a live whip spider that was found on a rotten mandarin orange in Regensburg, Oberpfalz, Bavaria.

The specimen was unfortunately killed and thrown away (most likely because it was mistaken for a dangerous true spider), but the available photos are by far good enough to conclude it was a subadult or small adult female of the genus *Damon* C. L. Koch, 1850 (family Phrynichidae Simon, 1892, subfamily Damoninae Simon, 1936).

We could not find precise information on the country where the fruits were imported from. But the most recent contributions and/or catalogues (Weygoldt 2000, Harvey 2003, Prendini et al. 2005) clarify the distribution of this genus to stretch over most of Sub-Saharan Africa through adjacent Arabian Peninsula (Yemen), where 11 species are currently recognized as valid.

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References

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Fig. 1. *Damon* sp., Regensburg, Germany. a. Individual. b. Close-up. Photos: Wolf-Peter Hartmann.

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