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Scientific note

On the synanthropic occurrence of *Falconina gracilis* in Venezuela and the type locality of *F. brignolii*

(Araneae: Corinnidae)

Oswaldo Villarreal & Antonio Brescovit

Human activity facilitates the dispersal of spiders beyond their native ranges, often allowing populations to establish in synanthropic environments. Synanthropic spiders provide well-documented cases of arthropods adapting to human-modified habitats, with examples across multiple families (e.g. Dippenaar-Schoeman et al. 2023, Henrard 2023, Murcia-Moreno & Gálvez 2024), including corinnids such as *Meriola arcifera* (Simon, 1886), *M. cetiformis* (Strand, 1908) and *Falconina gracilis* (Keyserling, 1891), all confirmed as synanthropic and introduced species (Taucare-Ríos et al. 2013, Nieto-Ruiz & Maldonado-Carrizales 2024).

The corinnid genus *Falconina* Brignoli, 1985, comprises seven Neotropical species (World Spider Catalog 2025). Two species are recorded from Venezuela: *F. melloi* (Schenkel, 1953) from Falcón State and *F. brignolii* García & Bonaldo, 2023 (García & Bonaldo 2023). The type locality of *F. brignolii* requires correction. It was originally and erroneously listed as “Sucre: Miranda, surroundings of the Universidad Metropolitana” (García & Bonaldo 2023). Universidad Metropolitana is in Caracas (Miranda State), specifically within Sucre Municipality, an administrative division of Caracas distinct from Sucre State.

Here, we report the first Venezuelan occurrence of *Falconina gracilis* (Keyserling, 1891), based on a female collected in a peri-domestic environment. This species is widely distributed across southern South America (Argentina, Brazil, Bolivia, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay) and has been introduced to the southern United States, Mexico (Valle et al. 2013, García & Bonaldo 2023, Nieto-Ruiz & Maldonado-Carrizales 2024) and Cuba (García & Bonaldo 2023). The Venezuelan specimen represents a range extension of approximately 2500 km north from the nearest known populations in Brazil. Its presence in a human-modified environment suggests a likely human-mediated introduction, consistent with its synanthropic tendencies documented elsewhere.

The specimen was examined using stereomicroscopes (Leica M125) and photographed using a digital camera (TrueChrome HD) attachment. Identification followed García & Bonaldo (2023).

Material examined: VENEZUELA, Aragua, La Victoria-San Mateo road, La Esperanza sector; 10°23'N, 67°25'W; 530 m a.s.l.; 8.vi.2025, O. Villarreal, J. Marval, N. Castillo, E. Castillo leg.; 1 ♀; (MIZA 0105857); collected in a peri-domestic environment.

The specimen matches the diagnosis of *F. gracilis* by the following characters: colour pattern (Fig. 1A, B, C), and morphology of the female external genitalia, with the epigynal plate with divergent margins and a median notch (Fig. 1D).

The occurrence of *F. gracilis* in Venezuela raises questions regarding the ecology of its congeners in the country. *Falconina brignolii*, so far known only from urban Caracas, may represent a native species adapting to anthropogenic habitats, whereas the ecological preferences of *F. melloi* remain undocumented. Distinguishing true introductions from native synanthropic expansions is challenging when baseline distribution data are incomplete. This emphasizes the need for surveys across urban–rural gradients and for standardized documentation of microhabitat associations. Such approaches would help clarify whether species such as *F. gracilis* are establishing breeding populations and how they interact with native congeners.

With this addition, Venezuela’s list of introduced spider species increases to 25 (Villarreal & Chamé-Vázquez 2024). Beyond this numerical update, the detection of *F. gracilis* underscores the importance of continued faunistic monitoring to assess establishment success and ecological interactions of non-native species, particularly in anthropogenically modified habitats where native and introduced congeners may overlap.

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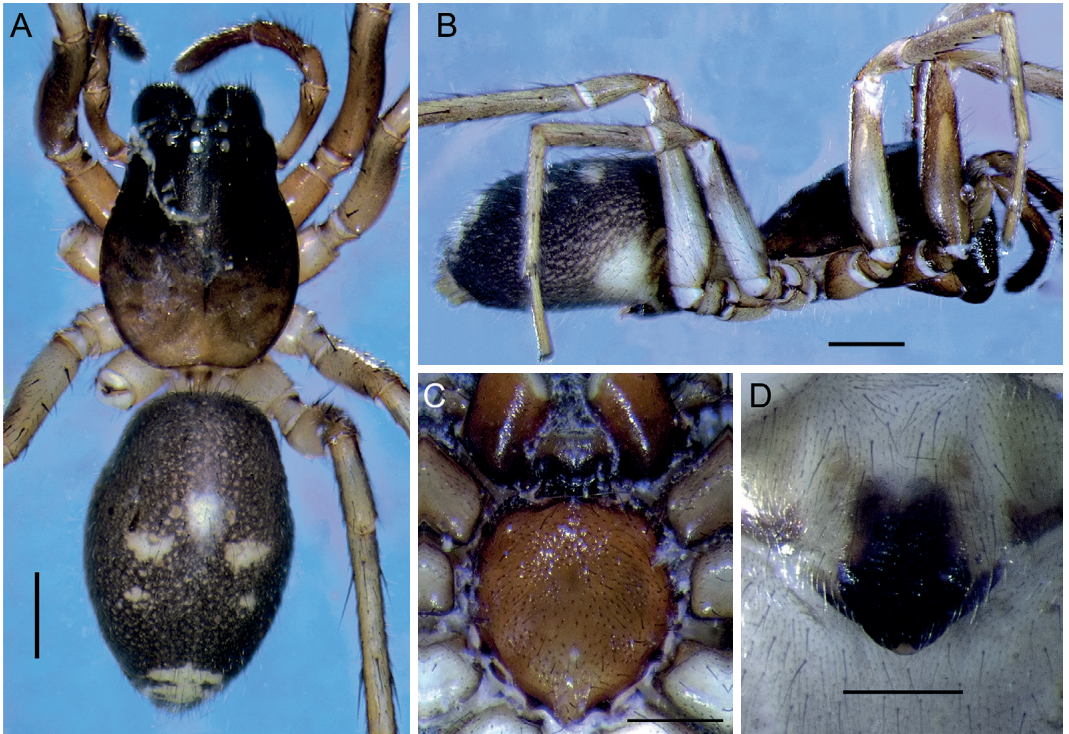


Fig. 1. *Falconina gracilis*, female (MIZA 0105857) from Aragua state. **A.** Habitus, dorsal view. **B.** Habitus, lateral view. **C.** Sternum, ventral view. **D.** Epigynal plate with divergent margins and a median notch, ventral view. Scale bars = 1 mm.

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