

RESEARCH NOTE

A NON-NATIVE SPIDER, *METALTELLA SIMONI*,
FOUND IN CALIFORNIA (ARANEAE, AMAUROBIIDAE)

The amaurobiid spider *Metaltella simoni* (Keyserling 1878), a native of Uruguay and Argentina, was introduced into the southeastern United States, where specimens were first captured in Louisiana in 1944; and it has since become fairly common both there and in Mississippi (Leech 1971, 1972). Additional records of this spider have been made in Florida and North Carolina in the USA and in Alberta, Canada (Leech & Steiner 1992). Here we report the finding of mature specimens of this spider in southern California.

Fourteen *Metaltella simoni* spiders were collected on the campus of the University of California–Riverside between 11 June and 2 September 1994. Ten mature males were collected in the basement or around the perimeter of the Entomology building: three live, one dead, two being fed upon by other spiders [*Steatoda grossa* (Koch) (Theridiidae) and *Holocnemus plucheii* (Scopoli) (Pholcidae)] and four desiccated samples from the web of a single black widow spider, *Latrodectus hesperus* Chamberlin and Ivie (Theridiidae). Four specimens were taken 2 km from this site at the Agricultural Research Station. They consisted of one mature of each sex, an immature male which molted to the penultimate stage in captivity before dying (all captured alive) and one female that was consumed as prey by a black widow spider. A remarkable aspect is that in an approximate 11-week period, 14 spiders (13 mature), heretofore unknown from California, were captured; and mostly the collection process was one of incidental discovery as opposed to a deliberate search. Therefore, it would not be surprising if *Metaltella simoni* is already firmly established in the Riverside area.

Metaltella simoni is most likely spread as a result of human commerce (Leech & Steiner 1992). The finding of this species in southern California is mostly of academic interest as it is rare for humans to suffer deleterious effects of venom from any amaurobiid (although it is not unknown, see König 1972).

These amaurobiid spiders are distinguished

from other confamilials in North America in that *Metaltella* has 5 or 6 teeth on the pro- and retromargin of the fang furrow whereas natives have fewer. Additionally, they differ markedly in that the male *Metaltella* palpal tibia has small processes (Leech 1972, Fig. 194, 195) whereas most North American male amaurobiids have rather large and ornate (bordering on flamboyant) tibial processes. The lateral margins of the female's epigynum each have a slender, postero-medially directed process ("tooth" in Leech 1972, Fig. 390) which terminates in a small knob; this is unlike any North American confamilial.

Initial species identification was corroborated by Dr. N. Platnick of the American Museum of Natural History. All specimens are housed in the R. S. Vetter collection at the University of California–Riverside. We thank Dr. C. Griswold and Saul Frommer for comments on an early draft of the manuscript.

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