Fauna of spiders (Aranei) of the Commander Islands

Kirill G. Mikhailov1*, Alexey S. Sazhnev2, Evgeniy A. Kuzmin3

1 Zoological Museum MGU, Bolshaya Nikitskaya Str. 2, Moscow 125009 Russia; mikhailov2000@gmail.com; https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3304-5470
2 I.D. Papanin Institute of Biology of Inland Waters, Russian Academy of Sciences, 101, Borok, Yaroslavl Area 152742 Russia; sazh@list.ru; https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0907-5194
3 EcoStandard group, Naberezhnaya Reki Moiki, 37, Saint Petersburg 191186 Russia; kea87@bk.ru
* Corresponding author

ABSTRACT. An annotated check-list of spiders of the Commander Islands is provided. To date, 27 spider species from 6 families are known from this area, together with 4 species being new for the fauna of the islands.


KEY WORDS: Araneae, oceanic islands, Pacific, new records, faunistics, geography, biodiversity.

Фауна пауков (Aranei) Командорских островов

К.Г. Михайлов*1, А.С. Сажнев2, Е.А. Кузьмин3

1 Зоологический музей МГУ, ул. Большая Никитская, 2, Москва 125009. E-mail: mikhailov2000@gmail.com
2 Институт биологии внутренних вод им. И.Д. Папанина, 101, Борок Ярославская область, 152742. E-mail: sazh@list.ru
3 ГК «Экостандарт», Санкт-Петербургский филиал, наб. реки Мойки, 37, Санкт-Петербург 191186. E-mail: kea87@bk.ru
* Автор для корреспонденции

РЕЗЮМЕ. В статье представлен аннотированный список пауков Командорских островов. Всего с территории региона известно 27 видов пауков из 6 семей, в том числе 4 вида отмечены в фауне островов впервые.


КЛЮЧЕВЫЕ СЛОВА: Araneae, океанические острова, Пацифика, новые находки, фаунистика, география, биоразнообразие.
Fig. 1. Schematical map of Bering Island (redrawn after: Sokolov, 1991).

Fig. 2. Schematical map of Mednyi Island (redrawn after: Sokolov, 1991).
Рис. 2. Остров Медный, картосхема (перерисовано из: Соколов, 1991).

Introduction

The Commander Islands are situated in the oceanic sector of temperate belt in non-icy part of the Bering Sea (Ponomareva, Isachenkova, 1991). There is a peculiar climate with relatively soft winter and cool summer. The Commander Islands are woodless, being mostly occupied by mountain tundra together with grassland (meadow) communities (Ponomareva, Yanitskaya, 1991).

The largest islands in the Commanders are Bering and Mednyi (Copper) ones (Figs 1, 2). Specialized arachnological investigations have never been conducted in the Commander Islands, but spiders were collected by numerous travelers and naturalists of a wide profile. First investigations of the Commander spiders were conducted by American zoologists in 1880–1890ies, mainly during fur-seal expeditions. The first known spider record is the description of a female of *Erigone sibiriana* Keyserling, 1886 (“Marx collection”) from “Commander Island, Siberia” (Keyserling, 1886). The name “Commander Island” was used for Bering Island in 18th, not in 19th century (Tatarenkova, 2018) by this reason the former name is regarded here as a mistake. Ten species are reported in a review paper by Marx (1892) devoted to the “arctic regions” of Eurasia and North America. This author also erroneously gives the islands name as singular — “Commander Island”. Unfortunately, his additional detailed paper with new species descriptions entitled “Description of some Arctic spiders from the Western Hemisphere” has never been published. As a result, 8 spider names are known as *nomina nuda* only — *Dictyna polaris* Marx, *Erigone algens* Marx, *E.
Spiders of the Commander Islands


Another American arachnologist, Banks (1899) recorded seven species of spiders from the islands (the total list see below), including one new for science — “Gonglidium [sic! — should be Gongylidium] borealis sp. nov.” (now Porrhomma boreale (Banks, 1899)) from Mednyi Island; three additional species were identified to the genus level only: Erigone sp. (2 females from Bering Island), Erigone sp. (obviously another species, 1 female from Bering Island), Pardosa sp. (2 males from Bering Island).

Materials of Banks kept in the National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution (Washington, DC, USA) were borrowed in 1986 by request of K.G. Mikhailov and examined by Moscow arachnologist Kirill Yu. Eskov. Finding of Microneta ululabilis (Keyserling, 1886) from Mednyi Island appeared to refer to “St. Paul, Pribiloff Is.”, according to the original label. Specimens from this sample identified by Banks as “Microneta ululabilis (Keys.), Erigone sp., etc.”, are actually a mixture of the following species (revised by K.Yu. Eskov in 1986): Oreonetides vaginatus (Thorell, 1872) (5♀), Hilaire vexatrix (O. Pickard-Cambridge, 1877) (4♀), Erigone arctica arctica (White, 1852) (3♂♀, 5♂), Bathyphanes brevipes (Emerton, 1917) (2♀), Collinsia holmgreni (Thorell, 1872) (now Halorates holmgreni, 1♂, 3♀), and Linyphiidae gen.sp. 4 juv. Microneta ululabilis was described from Sitka (Alaska), unknown from other localities (aside St. Paul) and regarded now as a junior synonym of Oreonetides vaginatus.

Two species of wolf spider genus Pardosa were also reported by Fox (1937) from Bering Island. By this paper, the American period of arachnological study of the Commander islands was finished.

First Russian-Soviet Commander arachnological studies were started in 1980–1990ies only and resulted in several papers by Eskov (1985, 1986, 1988; Tanasevitch, Eskov 1987; etc.). A new spider collecting on Commander Islands was made by A.S. Sazhnev in 2012–2013. These original data are provided herein.

The goal of this study is to provide survey of all species of spiders found or reported from the Commander Islands.

Material

Spiders from Commander Island is kept in a single Russian spider collection, in the Zoological Museum of the Lomonosov Moscow State University (ZMMU, Moscow Russia). Material collected in 1970–1980ies was identified by K.Yu. Eskov mostly kept in ZMMU, together with card catalogue of K.Yu. Eskov with exact label data. Specimens collected by A.S. Sazhnev were recently identified by E.A. Kuzmin are also transferred to ZMMU.

A list of original and literature data on spiders of the Commander Islands is given herein. Data on biotopes are given according to the original labels, publications, or cards of K.Yu. Eskov catalogue. Data on nominata nuda (see above) are not provided. Date of Carl Clerck publication (1758, not 1757) is given after ICZN Articles 3 and 20 (ICZN 2021).

Species list

Family ARANEIDAE

Larinioides cornutus (Clerck, 1758)

MATERIAL. 2♂♀, 2♀ (ZMMU), Bering Island, Severnoe Lezhbirdnoe (Severnyi Cape), 12.08.2013, leg. A.S. Sazhnev, det. E.A. Kuzmin.

The species is new for the Commander Islands.

LITERATURE DATA. Mednyi Island: graminous meadow-like community (Eskov, 1986, as B. simillimus (Keyserling, 1886)).

Missing in ZMMU collection.

Bathyphantes eumenis (L. Koch, 1879)

LITERATURE DATA. Mednyi Island: graminous meadow-like community (Eskov, 1986, as B. simillimus (Keyserling, 1886)).

Missing in ZMMU collection.

Family LINYPHIIDAE

Agyneta brusnewi (Kulczyński, 1908)

ORIGINAL DATA. 1♀, Bering Island, Drovenskoi Cape, scree on hill slope (K.Yu. Eskov card catalogue).

LITERATURE DATA. Bering Island, no biotope (tundra zone) (Eskov, 1985, as Meioneta b.).

Missing in ZMMU collection.
**Bathyphantes pogonias** Kulczyński, 1885


**Bolyphantes alticeps** (Sundevall, 1833)

**LITERATURE DATA.** Medny Island: no biotope (Eskov, 1988).

Missing in ZMMU collection.

**Ceratinella** sp.

**LITERATURE DATA.** Medny Island: graminaceous meadow-like community (Eskov, 1986). This reference is missing in K.Yu. Eskov card catalogue. Possibly, this specimen was redetermined later.

Missing in ZMMU collection. Moreover, specimens from Commander Islands are missing in all ZMMU Ceratinella material.

**Dismodicus alticeps** Chamberlin et Ivie, 1947

**ORIGINAL DATA.** 1 ♂, Medny Island (K.Yu. Eskov card catalogue).

The species is new for the Commander Islands. Missing in ZMMU collection.

**Erigone arctica sibirica** Kulczyński, 1908

**ORIGINAL DATA.** 1 ♂, Medny Island (K.Yu. Eskov card catalogue).

The species is new to the Commander Islands. Missing in ZMMU collection.

**Erigone cristatopalpus** Simon, 1884

= *Erigone simillima* Keyserling, 1886


**ORIGINAL DATA.** 1 ♂, 8 ♀♀, Medny Island, Glinka Bay, multitherbaceous tundra; 1 ♂, Medny Island (K.Yu. Eskov card catalogue, as *E. simillima*).

The species is new to the Commander Islands.

**Gnathonarium suppositum** (Kulczyński, 1885)

= *Erigone sibiriana* Keyserling, 1886


**ORIGINAL DATA.** 1 ♂, 4 ♀♀, Bering Island, Pogrebnoyaya (Peregrebnaya) Bay, meadow-type tundra; 1 ♂, 2 ♀♀, Medny Island (K.Yu. Eskov card catalogue, as *G. famelicum*).

**LITERATURE DATA.** Commander Island [sic!] (Keyserling, 1886, as *Erigone sibiriana*); Medny Island: gramineous meadow-like community (Eskov, 1986, as *G. taczanowskii* (O. Pickard-Cambridge, 1873), 1988).

**Hilaira herniosa** (Thorell, 1875)


**LITERATURE DATA.** Medny Island: gramineous-multitherbaceous meadow-like community (Eskov, 1981); Medny Island: no biotope (Eskov, 1987).

**Improphantes complicatus** (Emerton, 1882)


**LITERATURE DATA.** Medny Island (1 ♂ by K.Yu. Eskov card catalogue): gramineous meadow-like community (Eskov, 1986, as *Lepthyphanes*).

**Lepthyphantes leprosus** (Ohlert, 1867)


**LITERATURE DATA.** Medny Island (1 ♂ by K.Yu. Eskov card catalogue), no biotope (Tanasevitch, 1987).

**Mermessus maculatus** (Banks, 1892)

**LITERATURE DATA.** Medny Island: Glinka Bay (Eskov, Marusik, 1994, as *Eperigone maculata*).


**Oreoneta arctica** (Holm, 1960)

**LITERATURE DATA.** Bering Island (1 ♂ by K.Yu. Eskov card catalogue), no biotope (tundra zone) (Eskov, 1985, as *Hilaira montigena arctica*). Missing in ZMMU collection.
Oreonetides vaginatus (Thorell, 1872)
ORIGINAL DATA. 1 ♀, Medny Island, Glinka Bay (K.Yu. Eskov card catalogue).
LITERATURE DATA. Medny Island, no biotope (Eskov, 1988).

Porrhomma boreale (Banks, 1899)
LITERATURE DATA. Medny Island, “two specimens, male and female”, as Gonglydium (sic!) borealis (Banks, 1899); Commanders (Eskov, 1988, literature data).

It was recently reported from the Attu Island (Aleutians) (Růžička, 2018).

Sisicottus panopeus Miller, 1999
LITERATURE DATA. Commanders (Marusik, 2002).
Missing in ZMMU collection.

Tenuiphantes mengei (Kulczyński, 1887)
LITERATURE DATA. “Copper Island, Aug. 1897. [Barrett-J.Hamilton].” (Banks, 1899, as Batyphantes arctica (Keyserling, 1886), one specimen); Medny Island (Tanasevitch, Eskov 1987, Banks material revised); Bering Island (Holm, 1970, as Lepthyphanes m.); Commanders (Eskov, 1988, literature data).

Missing in ZMMU collection.

Tenuiphantes nigriventris (L. Koch, 1879)
ORIGINAL DATA. 1 ♂, Bering Island, meadow tundra (K.Yu. Eskov card catalogue).
LITERATURE DATA. Bering Island: no biotope (Tanasevitch, 1987); Commanders (Eskov, 1988, literature data).

Walckenaeria cuspidata Blackwall, 1833
ORIGINAL DATA. 1 ♀, Medny Island, Glinka Bay, coastal terrace, multiherbaceous tundra (K.Yu. Eskov card catalogue).
LITERATURE DATA. Medny Island, no biotope (Eskov, 1988, as W-ria (Cornicularia) c-ta).

Family LYCOSIDAE

Pardosa palustris (Linnaeus, 1758)
LITERATURE DATA. Bering Island, no biotope (Fox, 1937, as P. tarsalis (Thorell, 1856)).

Pardosa riparia (C.L. Koch, 1847)
LITERATURE DATA. Bering Island, no biotope (Fox, 1937, as P. cursoria (C.L. Koch, 1847)).

Family PHILODROMIDAE

Tibellus oblongus (Walckenaer, 1802)
LITERATURE DATA. Commander Island (Marx, 1892).

Family TETRAGNATHIDAE

Tetragnatha extensa (Linnaeus, 1758)
MATERIAL. 1 ♂ (ZMMU), Bering Island, Severnoe Lezhbishche (Severnyi Cape), 12.08.2013, leg. A.S. Sazhnev, det. E.A. Kuzmin.
LITERATURE DATA. Commander Island [sic!] (Marx, 1892; Strand, 1906, literature data).

Family THERIDIIDAE

Enoplognatha caricis (Fickert, 1876)
MATERIAL. 1 ♂ (ZMMU), Bering Island, Severnoe Lezhbishche (Severnyi Cape), 12.08.2013, leg. A.S. Sazhnev, det. E.A. Kuzmin.
The species is new to the Commander Islands.

Rugathodes sexpunctatus (Emerton, 1882)
LITERATURE DATA. Bering Island: Bobrovaya Bay; Medny Island: Glinka Bay (Marusik, 1989: Theridion sexpunctatum).
Missing in ZMMU collection.

Thymoites oleatus (L. Koch, 1879)
LITERATURE DATA. Medny Island, no biotope (Eskov, 1988).
Missing in ZMMU collection.

Discussion

To date, 27 spider species from six families are known from the Commander Islands; among them, four species are reported from the islands for the first time.

Biota of the Commander Islands seems to be most close to that of Kamchatka, being its de-
pleted variant, as shown by vascular plants (Ponomareva, Yanitskaya, 1991) and numerous groups of insects. In comparison to 250 Commander insect species (Sviridov, 1987; Lobkova, 2010; Chuzhekova, Sazhnev, 2013; Pekarsky, 2014; Anikin, Sinev, 2015; Sazhnev, 2015, 2017, 2018a; b; Lobkova, Semenov, 2017), more than 3700 insect species are known from Kamchatka (Storozhenko et al., 2002), and similarity of both territories by this parameter is being ca. 85% (Lobkova, 2010). The absence of dragonflies, orthopterans, aboriginous ant species, certain families of beetles and lepidopterans, all distributed in continental Kamchatka, is peculiar to the Commanders (Sazhnev, 2017). Extremely uneven level of research for different insect and other invertebrate groups in the islands should be also taken into consideration.

Similarity of Commander and Kamchatka spider faunas is hardly to estimate due to insufficient knowledge of the former one. To date, for 27 spider species known from the islands, 22, or 81.5% are found also in Kamchatka, and 5 species, or 18.5% are not found there.

Among the five latter species, Agyneta brunsnewi and Oreoneta arctica are tundra-inhabitants in Russia and also (O. arctica) in Alaska (Saaristo, Marusik, 2004; Marusik, Eskov, 2009); these species can be found in Kamchatka in the future. Three more species are widely distributed in North America with Rugathodes sexpunctatus and Sisicottus panopeus being known from its northern part including Alaska (Miller, 1999; Davidson, Merrrett, 2014), and Mermessus maculatus — mainly in the eastern part of the continent (Millidge, 1987). All these five species could settle the Commander Islands from the eastward and may constitute a specific component differing from the Kamchatka spider fauna.

As for spiders from Alaska, 19 species from Commanders, or 70.4%, are known from this region, including Erigone arctica arctica (White, 1852) and Walckenaeria cuspidata brevicula (Crosby et Bishop, 1931) (Paquin et al., 2010; WSC, 2021). To date, spider fauna of Commander Islands is slightly closer to the Kamchatka one.

Compliance with ethical standards

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST: The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest.

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Spiders of the Commander Islands


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