

A NOTE ON THE COURTING PATTERN OF PISAURA MIRABILIS (Clerck)

by R.LEIGHTON.

As is well known the male Pisaura mirabilis has the fascinating habit of capturing, wrapping and presenting his prey to the female as a prelude to mating. The stimulus for this behaviour has been ascribed by Bristowe (1958) to the chemo-tactic detection of the female drag line. This is probably true, but there seems to be a further force at work as the following will show.

In April 1967, an immature male was taken into captivity and was kept in a glass fronted box where it seemed to settle down quite happily. Late in May the spider moulted, and after 19 days was observed to be wrapping its prey and carrying it about in the chelicerae. This was not triggered off by either the sight of a female or the presence of a female drag line. In 1968 two specimens, one from Delamere Forest and the other from Loggerheads in Flintshire, were observed to follow the same pattern. The one from Delamere wrapping its prey 23 days after coming to maturity and the one from Loggerheads 18 days after moulting into the adult state.

As in all three cases the specimens were completely isolated, it would appear that there is another force at work, possibly of an endocrine nature working on a time basis.

References.

Bristowe, W.S. 1958. The World of Spiders. Collins.

ARANEUS PATAGIATUS Clerck AT ALVECOTE POOLS,
WARWICKSHIRE/STAFFORDSHIRE

by G.A.ARNOLD.

Araneus patagiatus is now known to be well distributed at Alvecote Pools, near Tamworth. A male and a female were first located, swept out of a gorse bush on the path side of Canal Pool, Pooley Fields, on 21st September 1963, and a female was obtained from the same gorse bush there on 16th June 1964 (B.S.S.G. Bulletin No.30, April 1966). A male was taken from low vegetation at Warren Farm orchard on 3rd September 1966, a mile north-west of the original find, and a male and a female were collected from an allotment hedgerow on the south bank of Pretty Pigs Pool on 22nd September 1968; Warren Farm is on the north bank of 36 acre Pretty Pigs Pool through which flows the River Anker.

Locket and Millidge (1953) record A.patagiatus as rare, found in England as far north as Northumberland. Recently, scattered distribution has been recorded from mid, north, east and south England, with some records from Ireland, west Wales and north Scotland.

References.

Locket, G.H. and Millidge, A.F. 1953. British Spiders. Vol.2. Ray Society
