

FAUNISTICAL OBSERVATIONS ON THE SPIDER FAUNA OF THE ZONIEN FOREST
(BELGIUM)

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The Zoniën forest is the largest forest (approx. 4300 ha.) on loamy soil in Belgium. It mainly consists of planted beechwood, but it also contains several other woodland types. Its importance is mainly due to the fact that large parts of the forest have never been anything else but woodland. This has led to the preservation of typical forest microhabitats for several centuries. These conditions make it a very suitable research area for studies on the ecology of forest inhabiting organisms, especially arthropods.

At present, results of sampling by means of pitfall-traps in eight different stands are available. Four of these ("D", "E", "G", "H") are beech forests; "E" and "G" are old beech stands, while "D" and "H" were recently planted. The stands "A", "B", "C" and "F" are mixed stands of varying age. They differ mainly in the structure and composition of the field and litter layer. The number of species per family per sampling site is as follows :

Stand :	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
Amaurobiidae :							1	
Dictynidae :								1
Dysderidae :								1
Segestriidae :					1			
Gnaphosidae :		1	2	2	1	2	2	2
Clubionidae :	3	3	1	3	2	2	1	2
Liocranidae :	1		1	1			1	1
Zoridae :	1		1					1
Anyphaenidae :	1		1	1	1	1	1	1

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Thomisidae :	3	1	1		2	2		1
Philodromidae :	1	2		2	1	1		2
Salticidae :				1		1	2	2
Lycosidae :	3	2	2	3	3	3	5	3
Pisauridae :			1		1			
Agelenidae :	6	4	4	4	5	5	6	4
Hahniidae :	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1
Theridiidae :	2		2		2	6	2	1
Metidae :	2	2	2	1	2	2	1	1
Tetragnathidae :	1	1	1		1	1	2	1
Araneidae :	1			1		1	2	
Linyphiidae :								
Erigoninae :	23	14	12	14	15	14	15	9
Linyphiinae :	25	18	15	15	15	23	20	17

A total of 137 species was obtained. Some of these are of a special faunistic importance. This is the case for *Philodromus praedatus* O.P.-CAMBRIDGE, which is new to the Belgian fauna and for *Achaearanea simulans* (THORELL), *Walckenaeria corniculans* (O.P.-CAMBRIDGE), *W. furcillata* (MENGE), *Centromerus pabulator* O.P. CAMBRIDGE and *C. leruthi* FAGE which are all rare species.

Two of the species we caught could not be identified uptill now. One of these is a *Robertus* species. Only four males of it were collected. It might be the unknown male of *R. alpinus* DRESCO, *R. catabricus* FAGE, *R. cardesensis* DRESCO, *R. arganoi* BRIGNOLI or *R. cotarelli* BRIGNOLI. It is also possible that it is new to science. This might also be the case for a *Centromerus* species of we collected four males and one female.

It is clear that the sampled habitats differ considerably in the composition of their spider fauna. They seem however all to be very rich in comparison with other forests. The capture of two probably new species illustrates the richness of this area.

Further research on the ecology of spiders will be carried out in the following years. We hope that the results from these investigations will be as interesting as the faunistic data presented here.