

**Foraging behaviour of the namib dune spider *Seothyra* (Eresidae)  
in relation to prey availability**

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The dune-burrowing spider *Seothyra henscheli* (Eresidae) of the Namib Desert builds a web comprising a vertical tubular burrow and a horizontal silken mat on the sand surface. A variable number of sticky, cribellar-silk capture lobes of the surface mat open onto depression in the sand and trap arthropods which blunder into them. The burrow serves as a thermal retreat from surface temperatures and enables the heat-tolerant spider to forage throughout the day. Construction and maintenance of the web evidently requires a high investment of silk and effort. Wind daily limits foraging activity by covering the capture lobes with sand. The spider's foraging activity is reflected by the degree to which they re-open the web after wind. Thus, the spider daily makes the decision to actively renew or extend the trapability of its costly web or to allow it to lapse. Through experiments, we determined that food-supplemented spiders reduce foraging activity and web dimensions, thereby decreasing risk of predation. By contrast, food-deprived spiders expend more foraging effort for less returns. This appears to be the best way for hungry spiders to avoid starvation in a prey-poor hyperarid environment where relocation incurs high costs.