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A NOTE ON THE MATING OF NEON VALENTULUS Falconer

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A pair of Neon valentulus Falconer were taken at Wicken Fen on 15th June 1960 and the spiders placed alive in separate corked tubes. The same day the female, who must have mated 2 to 3 weeks earlier, laid three eggs. The following day, the female was transferred to the tube containing the male. In this instance there was no courtship. The male, as soon as he sighted the female, watched her movements closely and then moved towards her. The female slowly waved her forelegs up and down in a graceful manner but as the male drew near she started to run away. However, she was prevented by the cotton wool plug of the tube in which they were enclosed. The male then leapt upon her from a distance of about  $\frac{1}{4}$ " , as if attacking a fly. For a few minutes he did not attempt to insert his palps but drummed with them on the female's head and then gradually he turned around on her cephalothorax to face in the opposite direction to hers. After about five to ten minutes he appeared to have inserted one palp. The pair remained together for over two hours before the male broke away.

The suggestion of encouraging signals by the female was interesting in that it seemed to lead to a bold approach by the male without signals from him. The same thing was observed in the case of Sitticus floricola (C.L.K.), whereas in an earlier mating, when the same female had been more challenging, the male gave characteristic signals.

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