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The female of *Philodromus praedatus* O. P.-Cambridge

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During a survey of Powerstock Common, Dorset, a single male of *Philodromus praedatus* O. P.-Cambridge was taken in a pitfall trap in July 1974 (see Merrett and Snazell 1975).

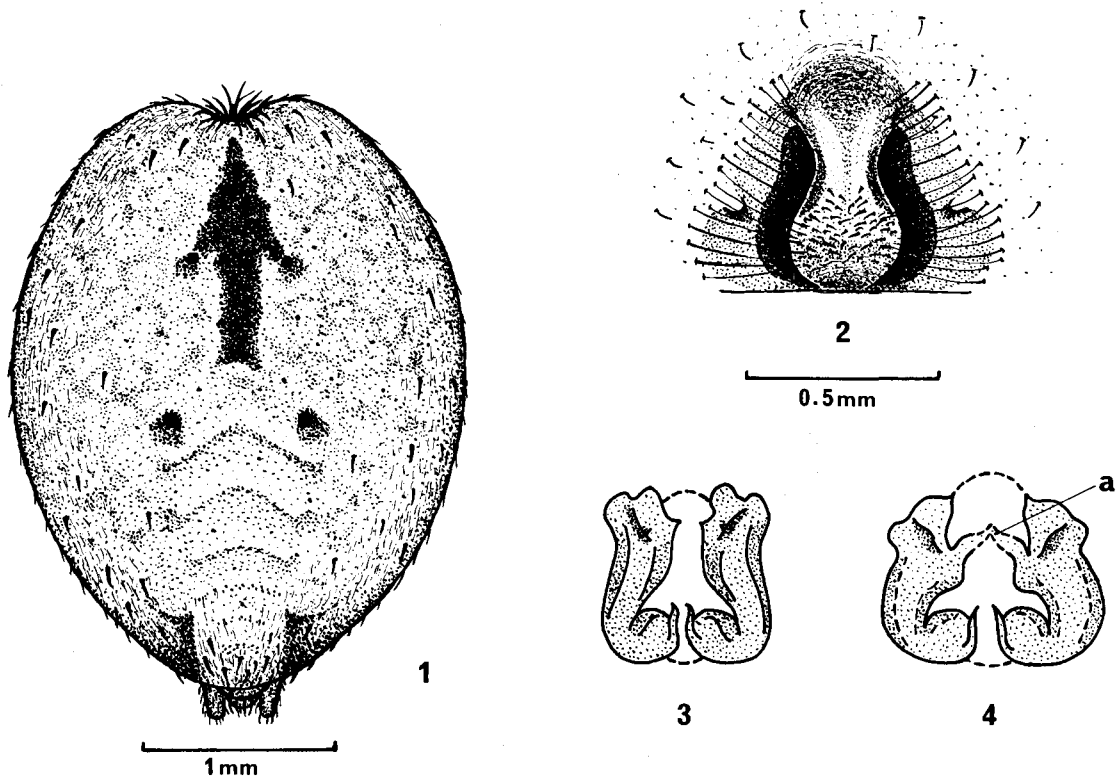
A thorough search of the sparse ground layer vegetation carried out during the following year yielded no more specimens. It was therefore thought likely that the habitat of the spider would be in the canopy of the oaks. The previous British records were from Bloxworth rectory (O. P.-Cambridge 1879-81, 1912) which had many large oaks in the vicinity, from the New Forest (a possible forest site) and from Shrewsbury (habitat unknown) (Locket, Millidge and Merrett, 1974). The European records of Simon (1875, p. 300) are from two forest sites and one of unknown habitat.

On 29 May 1975, a further male *P. praedatus* and two very distinctive female *Philodromus* were taken by beating the lower branches of oaks around the edges of a large clearing in the same general area and

habitat type as where the original male was taken. A further three of these distinctive females were beaten from other trees in the vicinity, but no other species of *Philodromus* were collected. It is therefore assumed that these females belong to *P. praedatus*.

The female of *P. praedatus* has been described previously only by Simon (1875). It is closely related to *P. aureolus* (Clerck), from which it cannot be distinguished with certainty on the basis of the epigyne (Fig. 2) or vulva (Figs 3-4). The vulva of *P. praedatus* sometimes shows a chitinised bridge (Fig. 4-a), but this is not a constant feature. The epigyne and vulva of most *Philodromus* species are variable (Braun, 1965), making the determination of females of some species impossible by sexual characters alone. However, the female of *P. praedatus* is very striking in general appearance and only an extremely dark, heavily marked specimen could be confused with *P. aureolus*.

The carapace is reddish-brown suffused with much pale yellow and white, giving a mottled effect not seen in *P. aureolus*. A wide pale central band is flanked by a lateral row of faint pale patches. The legs are yellow with some darkening distally on all femora and on both ends of tibiae I-III. The abdomen (Fig. 1) is pale straw yellow with a striking dark brown sagittate mark antero-dorsally. Posterior to this are two dark brown impressed dots. Chevrons are only occasionally present and then very faint. The sides of the abdomen show a small amount of darkening near the spinners. The total length of the females taken varies between 5.2 and 5.9 mm.



Figs. 1-4: *Philodromus praedatus* O. P.-Cambridge, female. 1 Dorsal view of abdomen; 2 Epigyne; 3 and 4 Vulva, dorsal view (a = chitinised bridge).

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