

**UMMIDIA TRAPDOOR SPIDER CAUGHT IN A *STEATODA* WEB
(ARANEAE: CTENZIDAE, THERIDIIDAE)**

The following is an account of a large immature trapdoor spider, *Ummidia* (Ctenizidae), being preyed upon by a mature female comb-footed spider, *Steatoda triangulosa* (Walckenaer) (Theridiidae) in an underground water meter housing. This event was observed by the junior author while he was collecting spiders in Sunset, Montague Co., Texas on 15 March 1985.

The water meter housing was in sandy loam soil, the lid flush with the ground, in a residential area. Upon removing the lid of the meter housing a typical theridiid tangle web was observed. The *Ummidia* was swathed with a large amount of silk and suspended with the ventral side up in the lower one-third of the web. The silk was tightly wrapped around the abdomen and legs three and four. The spider was immobile and appeared dead; however, when grasped with forceps legs one and two moved slightly, suggesting that it had already been bitten, but the venom had insufficient time or was incapable of totally paralyzing a spider of this size. The female *Steatoda* scurried to shelter near the upper rim of the housing when the lid was opened and was collected after the *Ummidia* was removed.

General statements of theridiid's ability to capture prey much larger than themselves are mentioned by Gertsch (1979, American Spiders, Van Nostrand Reinhold Co., New York 274 pp.) and Bristowe (1971, The World of Spiders, Collins, London 304 pp.). No reference was found regarding *Steatoda* feeding on large prey. In this instance the trapdoor spider was approximately 19 times larger by weight than the *Steatoda*. This late instar trapdoor spider weighed 567 mg (alcohol weight) and was 19 mm long (total length) and 7 mm wide at the cephalothorax. The *Steatoda* weighed only 30 mg (alcohol weight), was 6 mm long (total length), and 2 mm wide at the cephalothorax.

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