

## NEW DISTRIBUTIONAL RECORDS OF *NESTICODES RUFIPES* (LUCAS, 1846) IN INDIA

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ABSTRACT: *Nesticodes rufipes* (Lucas, 1846) is reported from Brahmangalam of Kerala, extending the distribution of the species to the south of India. The description, illustration and diagnosis of the species are also provided.

KEY WORDS: *Nesticodes*, India, Theridiidae, Red house spider

The genus *Nesticodes* is represented by only one species, *Nesticodes rufipes* (Lucas, 1846), commonly called the red house spider. The species has pantropical distribution, due to its transportation by ships and flight cargo. This monotypic genus is diagnosed by having the female epigyne consisting of a median conical elevation bearing the atrium with a large atrial lingua on its anterior side (Saaristo, 2010).

In India *Nesticodes* is reported from West Bengal only (Talukdar, 2013). They build tangled web in dark corners inside houses and under furniture. When disturbed, the spider will drop down via a drop line to the floor. Their food consists of ants and insects and they breed throughout the year. The round egg sack will be kept near the web but not on it. It is non-venomous to humans. In this paper we provide new distributional records of this spider from south of India. The description, illustration and diagnosis of the species are also provided.

### MATERIALS AND METHODS

The specimens were collected by hand during September, 2015 from Brahmamangalam of Kerala, India. Photographs of live specimens were taken with digital camera Canon EOS 600D. The microphotographic images were taken using Canon EOS 600D digital camera attached to Labomed CZM6 stereomicroscope connected with EOS utility software. The specimens were examined and preserved in 70% alcohol. Female epigyne was cleared in situ with 1% KOH. All measurements are in millimeters. Leg measurements are given in the order (Femur, Patella, Tibia, Metatarsus (except palp), Tarsus and Total). The specimens are deposited in the museum of Department of Zoology, Deva Matha College, Kuravilangadu, Kerala.

**Abbreviations in the text:** AME-anterior median eyes, ALE-anterior lateral eyes, PME- posterior median eyes, PLE- posterior lateral eyes.

### *Nesticodes rufipes* (Lucas, 1846)

(Fig. 1)

**Material examined:** Five females, one male, DMCK T-201-06, Brahmamangalam, 9.812847N, 76.427164E, 25 Sept, 2015, Col. Reshmi Sekhar, Kerala, India.

**Diagnosis:** Males are characterized by thin, anteriorly pointing embolus. Females with large medial elevation on the epigyne (Saaristo, 2010). Epigyne strongly sclerotized protruding in a position far in front of the epigastral furrow.

**Description:** Carapace (L: 4.24; W: 2.92); abdomen (L: 3.39; W: 3.18); Total body length: 7.63. Carapace light yellowish brown, comparatively longer than wide. Maxillae, labium and sternum yellowish-brown. Chelicerae short, vertical, yellowish brown, darker at base; anterior margin with two teeth and posterior margin without any teeth. Fangs short, pale brown. Clypeus yellowish, as wide as eye width. Eyes: Eight, heterogenous, in two equal length rows; posterior eye row demarcated with darker portion. Eyes diameter: AME=PME 0.33, ALE=PLE 0.26. Eye distance: AME-AME 0.10, AME-ALE=AME-PME 0.13, PME-PME=PME-PLE 0.21. Legs long, two clawed, pale yellowish brown clothed with spines. Palp and leg measurements: Palp (1.31, 0.38, 0.37, 0.10:2.16); I (3.52, 1.03, 2.78, 3.35, 1.74:12.42); II (2.92, 1.22, 1.83, 2.31, 1.40:9.68); III (2.49, 0.89, 1.74, 2.26, 1.46:8.84); IV (1.74, 3.26, 2.26, 1.03, 3.58: 11.87). Leg formula-1432. Abdomen oval, dorsal and lateral sides ash colored with black irregular spots. Venter also ash colored with black irregular spots, and a mid ventral dark brown patch. Spinnerets well developed and strongly sclerotised, ash colored, all are not equal in size. Colulus absent.

**Distribution:** Pantropical; India: West Bengal, Brahmanangalam, Kerala (New record).

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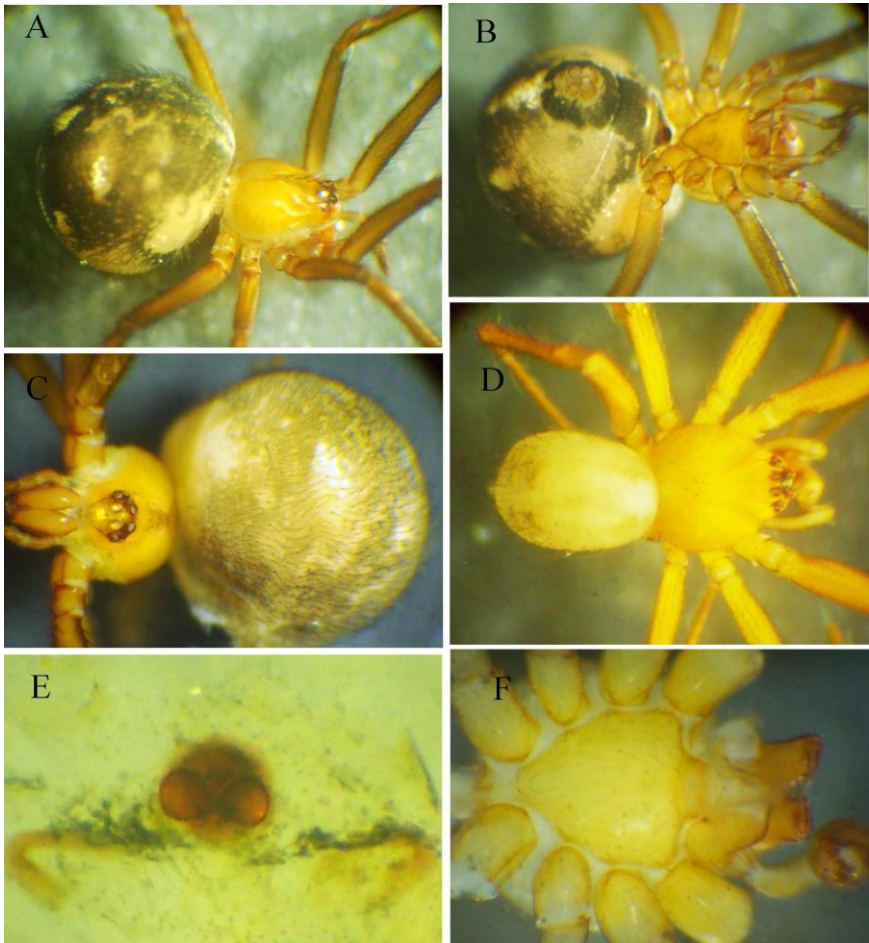


Figure 1. *Nesticodes rufipes* (Lucas, 1846): A. Dorsal view of female, B. Ventral view of female, C. Lateral view of female showing abdomen and eyes, D. Dorsal view of male, E. Epigyne- ventral view.