

THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF THE SPIDERS

Parental care in spiders



It's important to remember humans aren't the only ones who take extraordinary steps to protect, nurture and raise their young.

The animal kingdom is flush with moms that take the time to teach their babies how to find food and protect themselves against the elements. Let's have look on a very vivid group of creatures i.e. arachnids (an arthropod group), normally we call them spider, going the extra mile for their babies (spiderling).



Mating of jumping spider

The male spider carefully approaches the female and begins a choreographed courtship dance unique to his species. She watches, waits and decides whether he's a suitable mate. Wary of her bigger size, he transfers his sperm to her and, if he's lucky, speeds away with his life. She fertilizes her eggs with his sperm. Up to this point, spiders are all the same. All spiders lay eggs and wrap them with silk into some kind of egg sac. Most spider species wrap their eggs completely, making a tidy bundle, but some spin just a few threads that barely hold their egg together. Egg sacs are often distinctive in color and shape and can even be used to identify a species. For most spider mothers, finishing an egg sac is where their parental duties end. But for some, the parenting journey is just beginning.



Female Camaricus Maugi Spider with babies [EXIF - 1/320 | f/25 | ISO 125| Nikon 70-300 lens with Raynox DCR 250, manual flash & homemade flash diffuser]

Mother spider does several things once her eggs are laid. Some spiders, such as some wolf spiders, carry their egg sacs behind them, dragging them with a short strand of silk. Wolf spiders are much more involved in their offspring's lives and much more protective over their young. Just before hatching, a mother wolf spider perforates the egg sac to help the immature spiders out. Mother wolf spiders carry their young on their backs; the young entangle their legs together to keep hold. Mother wolf spiders even help their babies drink water, leaving a few legs in the water source and allowing the immature spiderlings to climb down.



A female wolf spider carrying her eggs on her back.



A female wolf spider carrying her young on her back [EXIF - 1/200 | f/20 | ISO 125 | Nikon 105mm Macro with manual flash & homemade flash diffuser]

Many web-building spiders suspend their egg sacs somewhere in the web and dutifully stand guard. Other spiders may lay out sheets of silk to protect their fragile egg cases.



Eggs protecting mother [EXIF - 1/250 | f/25 | ISO 100, manual flash & diffuser |

Named for their habit of holding their front legs in a crab-like pincer position, many species in this family perch high on vegetation to ambush flying insects. The crab spiders will often sit on a flower until the petals wilt before moving onto another flower.

During the summer months the males mature first, migrating to find other nests. The females mate within their parental nest before their own migration

After mating, female flower spiders conceal and guard their woolly egg sacs within a leaf or grass blade shelter.



Mating activities of white Crab Spider



Eggs protecting mother

Cellar spiders, the ubiquitous spindly brown spiders that spin cobwebs in dusty corners, carry their loosely wrapped eggs in their jaws. These mothers sometimes host their spiderlings in their web after hatching. Nursery web spiders carry their egg sac by mouth and build their spiderlings nursery webs. When the spiderlings are ready to hatch, their mom will find a structure, often a leaf, and spin a silk tangle under it with the egg sac at the center. She stands guard for over a week until the spiderlings go through a post-hatch molt.



Female daddy-longlegs spider carries her eggs in her jaws until they hatch

Spitting Spider catch their prey by spitting a fluid that congeals on contact into a venomous and sticky mass. They enjoy parental care (female provides care). The female uses her chelicerae to hold her eggs until hatching. After hatching, there is an extended mother-offspring association, with juveniles tending to remain in their mother's web until after the third moult. Females take prey to their juveniles and either feed alongside the juveniles or leave the juveniles to feed alone.



Spitting Spider with Eggs



Spitting Spider with Eggs carries her eggs/babies in her jaws.

Jumping Spider (Salticidae), families of spiders that present parental behaviours that warm the heart and routinely blow the mind. Jumping spiders have more to them than their tiny sizes and significant eyes. Most species in this family have been found to carefully wrap their eggs with silk and stand guard to ward off predators.



Female two-striped jumper spider mother carefully guards her babies.



*Tailed jumper mother carefully guards her babies. Life size 4-5 mm
[EXIF - 1/320 | f/36 | ISO 100. Raynox DCR 250 with flash & diffuser]*

The female huntsman spider makes a great mom. She will lay all 200 of her eggs inside an egg sack which she places behind bark or under a rock. While the babies are developing she will stand guard to protect them day and night for three weeks without even eating.



Female huntsman spider with eggs sack.

The female Lynx Spider shows great parental care by protecting her eggs, It's observed female lynx spider attached and killed other female spider to captured her nest or best place to lay her own eggs.



Two female lynx spiders fight for nesting

After hatching egg sacs, she guard her young ones until the spiderlings can fend for themselves. (Each egg sac contains 25 to 600 bright orange eggs, with an average of 200 eggs in a sac). The post-embryo remains in the egg sac, requiring 11 to 16 days to hatch.



Lynx spider protecting her babies



Green lynx spider protecting her babies

[EXIF - 1/125 | f/22 | ISO 100. Nikon 70-300 lens & Raynox DCR 250 with flash & diffuser]

Many species' spiderlings hatch and simply fend for themselves. They either walk to new locations or travel by ballooning, a process whereby the tiny critters let loose a strand of silk that carry them miles away in the wind.



A colony of small baby spiders



Baby spiders crawling on a web

In nature a twist will always be there sometimes some species spiders eat other species spiders egg and rarely devour these of same species.



*BARK JUMPING SPIDER (Phacacius lancearius) eating **two-striped jumper** spider eggs*



Female Tailed jumper eat same species spiders eggs

For capturing different moments of Green lynx spider I used my Nikon D7500/D5300 camera with 70-300mm/Nikon 105mm Nikon lens and macro attachment with Manual Flash & Homemade Flash Diffuser.



Arunava Dey

ARUNAVA DEY, AFIAP, EFIP,
Freelance Macro Photographer
&
Member of Photographic Society Murshidabad [PSM].