

DIVERSITY OF THE GOBLIN SPIDER GENUS *BRIGNOLIA* (FAMILY: OONOPIDAE) IN SRI LANKA

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The goblin spider genus *Brignolia* (Dumitrescu & Georgescu, 1983) currently contains thirty one species and is found in Borneo, India, Mauritius, Nepal, Philippines, Seychelles, Sri Lanka, Thailand, USA, Vietnam and the West Indies. Four species: *Brignolia ambigua*, *B. nigripalpis*, *B. ratnapura* and *B. sinharaja*, have been recorded from Sri Lanka. Heavily sclerotized palps with dorsal depression are diagnostic characters that define *Brignolia*. The current study reports results of a survey of the genus *Brignolia* in the island. Field visits were conducted in 74 sites covering 20 districts in Sri Lanka. Litter samples collected from these sites were sifted and left over night in a Winkler extractor. Collected specimens were examined using stereomicroscopy (Olympus SZX 7). Left male palps were immersed in a few drops of Kaiser's glycerol, slide mounted and observed. Illustrations were made with an Olympus BX51 compound microscope attached to a drawing tube. Of the 273 collected goblin spider specimens, 63 specimens (25 males and 38 females) belonged to the genus *Brignolia*, and were collected from 30 sites. Eight specimens (four males, four females) from Badulla District and three (2 males, 1 female) from Nuwara Eliya District were identified as *Brignolia ratnapura*. Their body size ranged from 1.26 mm to 1.44 mm. The males are equipped with a rounded, dorsally sclerotized protrusion on the palp. One male specimen (body length: 1.30 mm) collected from Matale District was identified as *Brignolia ambigua* from their short, distally expanded, blunt tipped, palpal bulb. A male specimen (body length: 1.34 mm) with dorsally directed palpal bulb was identified as *Brignolia nigripalpis*. It was collected from Kandy District along with three female specimens. *Brignolia trichinalis* known from Mauritius and Seychells is recorded from Sri Lanka for the first time. *Brignolia ambigua*, *B. nigripalpis* and *B. ratnapura* are restricted to the Central highlands. Of them, the first two species are endemic to Sri Lanka. *Brignolia parumpunctata* is recorded for the first time from Lowland forests (8 - 125 m). *Brignolia ratnapura* and *B. parumpunctata* had similar palps. However, the dorsal protrusion in the palps is more coiled in *B. parumpunctata* than in the latter species. Two new *Brignolia* species have been recorded from high elevation forests in Kandy and Badulla Districts. The study reports seven *Brignolia* species from the different collection sites in the country. Of the seven, three species have been recorded previously, two species are new records for Sri Lanka and two other species are new to science.

Funding provided by the National Institute of Fundamental Studies, Sri Lanka, is acknowledged.

Keywords: *Brignolia*, Conservation, Goblin spider, Oonopidae.