

Notes on the jumping spider *Siler semiglaucus* (Simon, 1901) in Thailand (Araneae: Salticidae: Heliophaninae)

Peter Grob¹

¹ Kilchberg ZH, Switzerland, email info@petergrob.ch, website www.springspinnen.ch

The heliophanine salticid *Siler semiglaucus* (Simon, 1901) is a colourful inhabitant of the rainforests of south to southeast Asia, from Sri Lanka to the Philippines (WSC, 2015; Prószyński, 2014; Metzner, 2015). It was originally described under the genus *Cyllobelus* (Simon 1901a, 1901b), but was later transferred to the genus *Siler* Simon, 1889 by Prószyński (1985). The colouration of males and females is similar, but males bear a feathery bottle brush of black setae on their first legs (Simon, 1901b; Hill, 2009). *S. semiglaucus* is known to selectively associate with, and to prey upon, ants. It often attacks these ants from the rear, biting and then retreating before a subsequent approach (Jackson & Van Olphen, 1992; Cushing, 2012). Its rapid ant-like gait, with frequent changes of direction, is similar to that of *Phintella piatensis* Barrion & Litsinger, 1995, and species of the genus *Myrmarachne* MacLeay, 1839, and may represent a form of behavioral mimicry that protects these spiders from nearby ants (Nelson *et al.*, 2004).

I first observed *Siler semiglaucus* at Amphoe Krabi, southern Thailand in February of 2014. This report is based on subsequent observations at Amphoe Wiangkaen, Chiangrai, northern Thailand in April of 2015. All photographs were taken in nature.

Habitat. Found on dead wood, bamboo, and palm leaves in lower vegetation, at places with relatively high humidity near water.

General behaviour. Males constantly patrolled their territory at various elevations, waving their feathered front legs and bobbing their abdomen up and down. They stopped from time to time to look around if any signal from a female or another male was seen (Figures 1-2). Remarkably, I often saw male *S. semiglaucus* following the trails of small (approximately 3 mm) black ants (Figure 3). No interaction between *S. semiglaucus* males and this ant species was observed, other than avoidance.

Females on patrol were much less active than males. They often sat half-hidden with raised front legs, looking out from this vantage point (Figures 4-5). On one occasion I watched a female attack a black ant worker that was carrying a larva, and steal this larvae right out of the mandibles of that ant (Figures 6-7).

Courtship dance and mating. When a female and male *S. semiglaucus* made 'eye contact' and the signs from the female were positive, the male began to dance in front of the female. During this dance the male completed half-circles around the female at a distance of ~5 cm, from left to right and right to left, always waving the feathered front legs and bobbing the black abdomen while facing the female. Then the male approached the female only to pull back immediately without touching the female, apparently to check out her reaction. If the signs were still positive, the male continued to circle the female at a shorter distance, and approaching took place more often (Figures 8-9). Finally, when all signals from the female were 'go', the male approached to make a 'handshake' with the female (Figure 10), then moved alongside the female to mate (Figure 11).



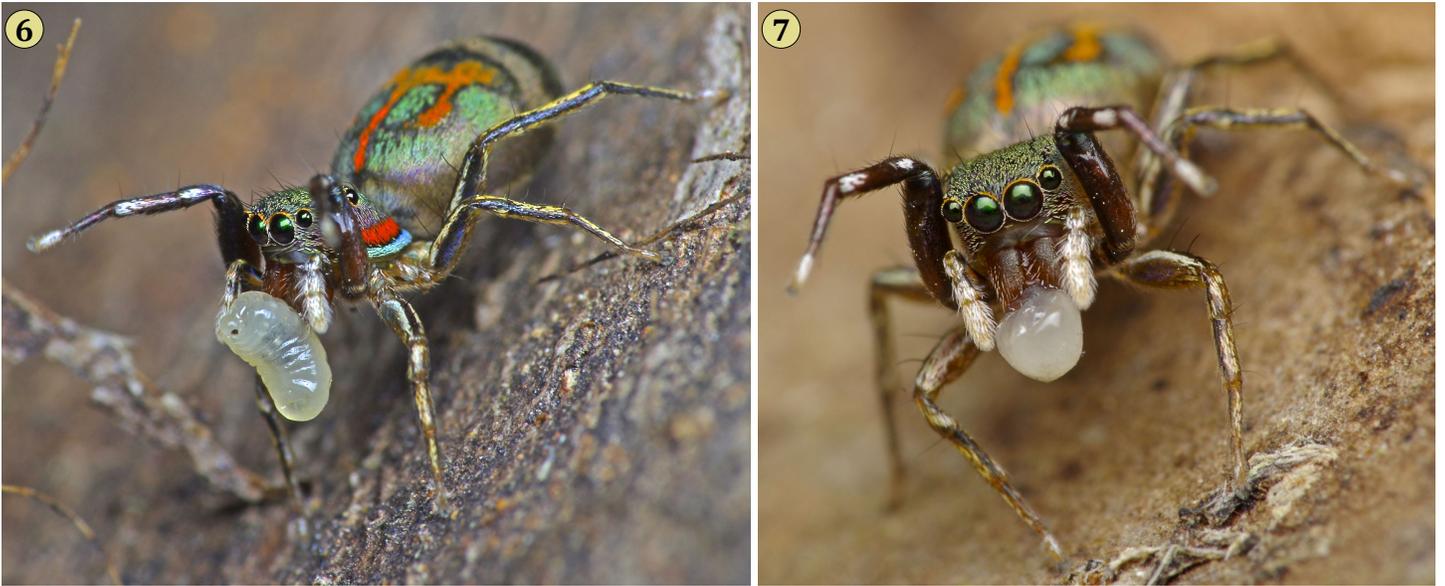
Figures 1-2. Male *Siler semiglaucus* on patrol.



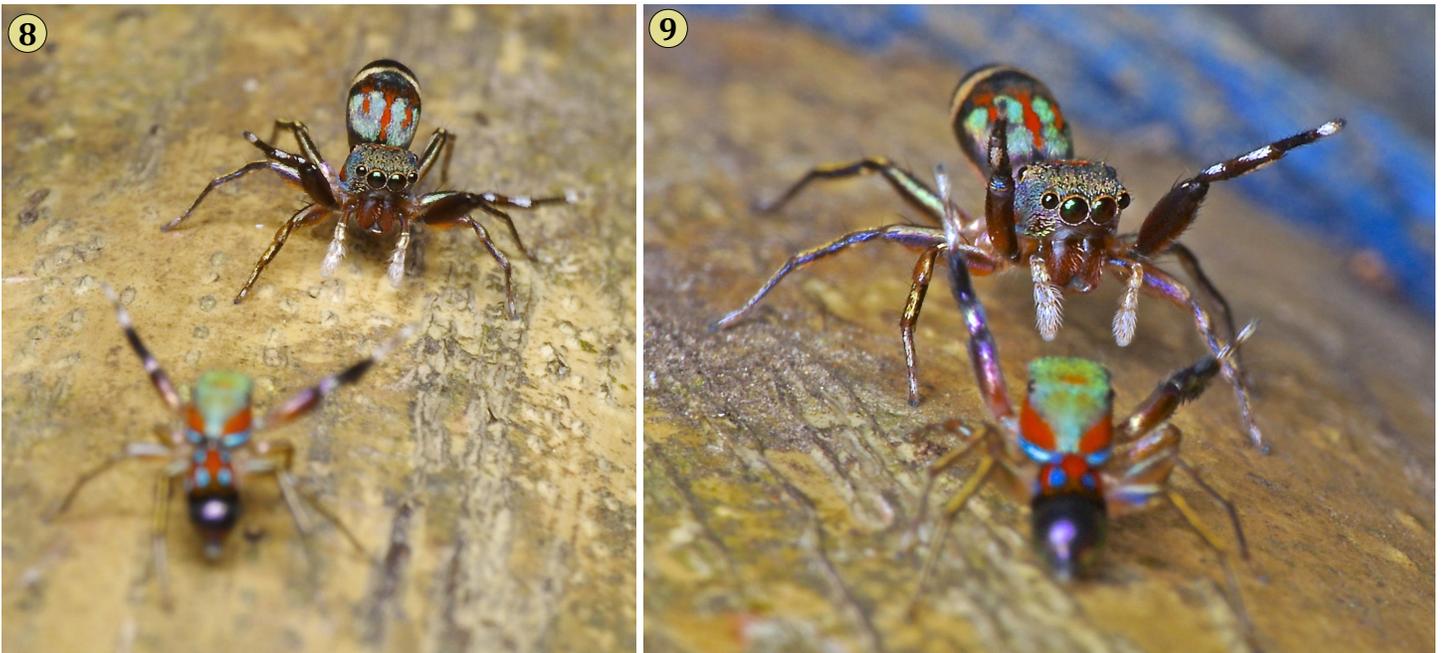
Figure 3. Small black ants (~3 mm) that were followed by males.



Figures 4-5. Female *S. semiglaucus* watching with the first legs raised to a vertical position.



Figures 6-7. Two views of a female *S. semiglaucus* feeding on a larva that she took from an ant worker.



Figures 8-9. Male *S. semiglaucus* (foreground) approaching a larger female with first legs extended and raised. Note the position of the female, with the first legs raised, pedipalps held vertically at the sides of the exposed chelicerae, and the elevated abdomen.



Figure 10. Male *S. semiglaucus* (at left) making a close approach to touch the legs of a female.



Figure 11. Male (in foreground) and female *S. semiglaucus* mating on the left side.

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