

[Short Communication]

**Re-uniting sexes after a century: *Rhitymna ingens* Simon 1897 is a junior synonym of *R. pinangensis* (Thorell 1891) (Araneae: Sparassidae).**

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**Abstract** — *Rhitymna ingens* Simon 1897, type species of the genus *Rhitymna* Simon 1897 is recognized as junior synonym of *Rhitymna pinangensis* (Thorell 1891). Evidences of similar morphology and body size as well as syntopic occurrence was finally completed by the observation of a mating couple in the forest in Sarawak, Malaysia. The species is firstly recorded from Brunei.

**Key words** — Synonymy, taxonomy, huntsman spiders, type species.

The genus *Rhitymna* Simon 1897 was revised by Jäger (2003). Type species is *R. ingens* Simon 1897, known only by females. Another species, *R. pinangensis* (Thorell 1891), with a similar colour pattern and size was believed to be a probable senior synonym of *R. ingens* (Jäger 2003). This assumption is now supported by new evidence from behavioural data.

Abbreviations: BM — Brunei Museum (Norhyatty Morni); RMBR — Raffles Museum of Biodiversity Research, Singapore (H. K. Lua); JK — Prefix to serial numbers of specimens examined by Joseph K. H. Koh; MNHN — Museum national d'histoire naturelle Paris, France (C. Rollard); PJ — Prefix to serial number for specimens of Sparassidae examined by Peter Jäger; SD — Prefix to serial number of Senckenberg tissue samples for molecular work; SMF — Senckenberg Research Institute Frankfurt, Germany (P. Jäger); ZMUC — Zoological Museum of Natural History Copenhagen, Denmark (N. Scharff).

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Family Sparassidae  
Genus *Rhitymna* Simon 1897  
*Rhitymna pinangensis* (Thorell 1891)  
(Figs. 1–5)

*Sarotes pinangensis* Thorell 1891: 6, 78 (Description of male; Holotype male [PJ1191]: Pulo Pinang, Westermann, ZMUC, examined)

*Rhitymna ingens* Simon 1897: 485 (Description of female; Holotype female: Java, Palabuan, Fruhstorfer, MNHN 1625–15567, examined). Jäger 2003: 102, figs 1–14, 21, 94 (illustration of female, distribution map). syn. nov.

*Olios pinangensis*, — Gravely 1931: 243 (description of female, not examined [see notes in Jäger 2003], transfer to *Olios*)

*Heteropoda pinangensis*, — Bonnet 1957: 2193 (transfer to *Heteropoda* without explanation)

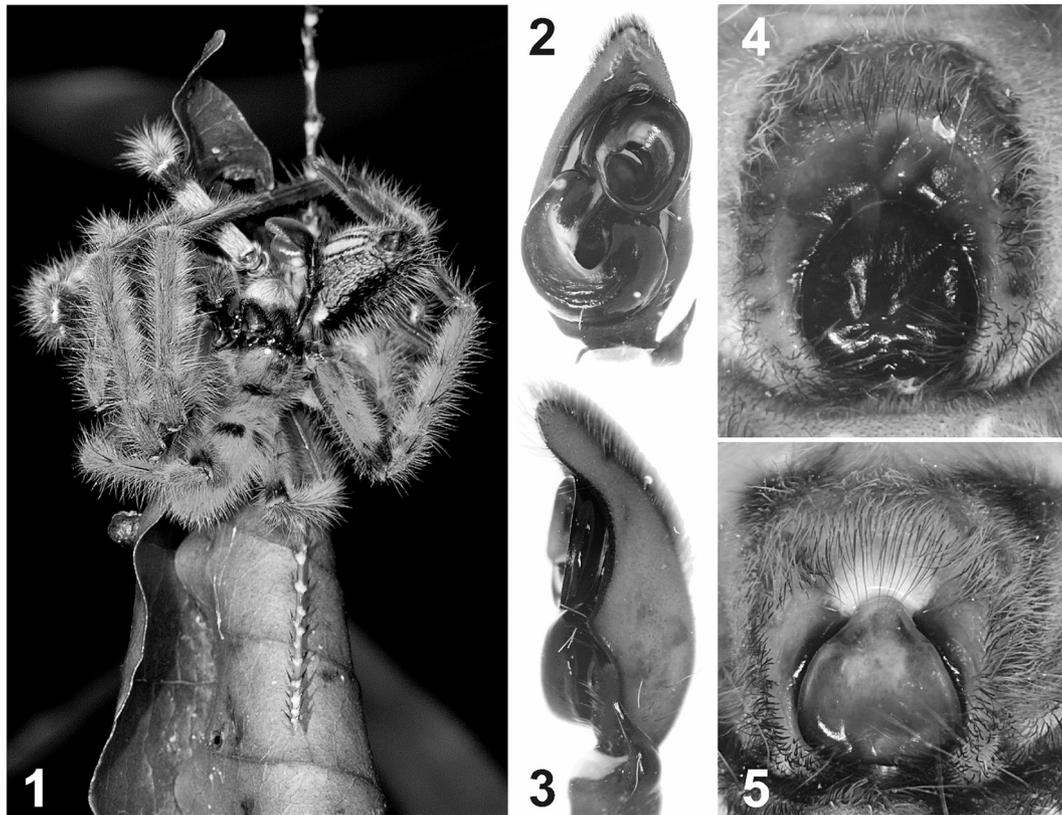
*Rhitymna* sp. Murphy & Murphy 2000: fig. 25.1 (photograph of male, PJ 1594, Malaya, West Pahang, Genting Highlands, 700 m altitude, secondary rainforest, 9.II.1988, A.21, Coll. Murphy, examined)

*Rhitymna pinangensis*, — Jäger 2003: 103, figs 15–20, 94 (illustration of male, distribution map transfer to *Rhitymna*)

*Additional material examined.* MALAYSIA. 2 males (PJ 3284–3285), 5 females (PJ 3286–3290), Cameron Highlands, imported, T. Adam ded. 27.IV.2008 (SMF 61299). 1 male (PJ 2464, SD 520), with same data as for preceding specimens (SMF 61300). 1 male (PJ 2463, SD 519), with same data as for preceding specimens (SMF 61302). 1 female (PJ 2462, SD 518), with same data as for preceding specimens (SMF 61303). 1 male (PJ 3283), most likely Cameron Highlands, F. Schneider ded. 29.IV.2006 (SMF 61301). 1 female (JK 10.10.04.0018, RMBR), Malaysia, Sarawak, Miri Division, Sibuti, N04°10'44" E113°59'27", degraded lowland rainforest, J. K. H. Koh leg. 4.X.2010. 1 male (JK 10.10.19.0002, RMBR), Malaysia, Sarawak, Kuching Division, Kampong Budy, Permai, N01°45'25" E110°18'53", degraded lowland rainforest, J. K. H. Koh leg. 19.X.2010. 1 female (JK 10.10.19.0003, RMBR), same data as preceding specimen. BRUNEI. 1 male (JK 09.10.14.1001, BM), Tutong, Tasek Merimbun Heritage Park, N04°32'26" E113°39'08", primary lowland rainforest, J. K. H. Koh leg. 14.X.2009. For further material previously examined see Jäger (2003).

*Diagnosis and description.* See Jäger (2003). Although both sexes share certain characteristics in general appearances (e.g., black palps and chelicerae, darkly coloured cephalic region, distally banded femurs, and banded tibia I and II with characteristically long hair tufts), live specimens are distinctly different in their overall colouration: Live males are strikingly reddish orange, while females show rather greyish brown colours (Fig. 1).

*Distribution.* Malaysia (Pulau Pinang [Penang], Genting



**Figs. 1–5.** *Rhitymna pinangensis* (Thorell 1891) from Malaysia — 1, mating couple (reddish male in front; female's retreat in rolled leaf at bottom), Kuching, Sarawak; 2–3, male palp (2 ventral, 3 retrolateral; hairs partly removed), from mating couple, cf. Fig. 1; 4–5, female epigyne, ventral, showing variation (4 Miri, Sarawak; 5 from mating couple, Fig. 1). All photos by J. Koh.

[in Selangor & Pahang], Cameron Highlands [in Pahang], Sarawak), Indonesia (Sumatra: Kepulauan Mentawai, Java: Palabouan) (Jäger 2003), Brunei Darussalam (first record).

*Notes.* Conspicuity of *R. pinangensis* males and *R. ingens* females was first suggested by Jäger (2003), on the basis of similarities in size and colour pattern and proximity in previously known distribution range. German pet keepers who sent live and preserved spiders to P. Jäger reported that these were collected together at the same locality. Moreover mating was observed in captivity, although this admittedly cannot be conclusive proof of conspecificity, since the artificial circumstances and confined environment in laboratory conditions could have allowed or caused unnatural copulation to take place across species (a similar case was observed in one male of *Heteropoda tetrica* and a female of *Heteropoda venatoria*, Jäger unpublished observation). Nevertheless, there is now a photographic field record of mating in nature (Fig. 1), and is presented here as final evidence of conspecificity. Therefore *R. ingens* is proposed as a junior synonym of *R. pinangensis*. The valid name of the type species is *R. pinangensis*.

So far, 17 species of the genus *Rhitymna* have been recorded. Three of them, all African species, do not belong to *Rhitymna*; another species (*R. xanthopus* Simon 1901), from Malaysia, is probably also an additional synonym of *R. pinangensis* (cf. Jäger 2003: 102).

The species is known to live among the foliage in primary and degraded rainforests. The female can be found in a retreat between leaves, which serves as a shelter for the egg sac guarded by the mother. In the observed case, mating took place at night, above the shelter which must have been occupied by the female.

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