

# SpiderFest Report – 112 spider species and counting...

During May 2012 a highly successful series of spider events took place in North Wales. Cofnod, in association with the British Arachnological Society, helped organise what was known as “SpiderFest – a Fortnight Focused on Spiders”.

SpiderFest began with a Spider Identification Course at Treborth Botanic Gardens, Bangor on the 13th May 2012. Twelve people attended on the day and were given an overview of British spiders, their biology, ecology and identification methods. Attendees were also introduced to spider sampling techniques/equipment and had the opportunity to deploy these in the grounds of the gardens, gathering samples for identification in the afternoon.



Six of the course participants joined me on the 23rd May 2012 to survey spiders on Bryn Pydew, a North Wales Wildlife Trust reserve near Llandudno. A morning sea fret kept a lid on temperatures whilst searching the woodland, but this had dissipated by the time we got out onto the limestone grassland/pavement. The surveyors used a variety of sampling techniques (grubbing, beating, stone turning, sweep

netting and vacuum sampling), producing a species list of 23 spiders, a harvestman and a pseudoscorpion. Of particular interest was the discovery of a single female *Ozyptila sanctuaria*, a tiny soil encrusted crab spider which is new to the reserve and only the fifth North Wales location for this species. We then took an early evening excursion to the Great Orme to see two of its specialist spiders: *Atypus affinis* and *Segestria bavarica*.



Over the long weekend of the 25–28th May 2012 the British Arachnological Society descended on Plas Tan y Bwlch field centre for their A.G.M. and field weekend. The society surveyed several sites: Hafod Garregog NNR, Traeth Glaslyn, Coed

Crafnant, Snowdon and the Plas itself – naturally! Some members also participated in a further spider identification workshop on the afternoon of the 26th May.

The results of the survey sessions are still incomplete, but preliminary results are tabulated below. The following interesting spiders were encountered during the B.A.S. survey: *Dolomedes fimbriatus* (Hafod Garregog); *Halorates distinctus* and *Theridiosoma gemmosum* (Traeth Glaslyn).

The silvery *Theridiosoma gemmosum* is a new vice county record for Merionethshire. *Scotophaeus blackwalli* and *Pseudeuophrys lanigera* were discovered within the field centre’s buildings and, it would appear, are both new records for Merionethshire too!

In total the SpiderFest surveys recorded 112 different species of spider, roughly one-sixth of the British spider fauna! It is hoped that this event will have stimulated a greater interest and appreciation of spider recording in North Wales.

Numbers of arachnid species recorded during SpiderFest			
Site	Spiders	Harvestmen	Pseudoscorpion
Bryn Pydew	23	1	1
The Great Orme	2	0	0
Hafod Garregog NNR	65	2	0
Traeth Glaslyn	26	0	0
Coed Crafnant	21	1	0
Plas Tan y Bwlch	8	2	0
Snowdon	16	1	0
Total species SpiderFest	112	3	1

**Richard Gallon – North Wales Spider Recorder**

