

Biodiversity Record: First Singapore record of the crab spider, *Phrynarachne decipiens*

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Subject: Deception bird dropping crab spider, *Phrynarachne decipiens* (Arachnida: Araneae: Thomisidae).

Subject identified by: Luke Ang.

Location, date and time: Singapore Island, Upper Seletar Reservoir Park; 1 October 2023; around 2220 hrs.

Habitat: Freshwater swamp forest, at the fringes of open parkland.

Observers: Luke Ang and Wong Kwang Ip.

Observation: An example, about 17 mm in width with limbs folded, was spotted about 40 cm above the ground on a shrub, and about 5 m off a small road. It was crouched on a small, irregular, oval-shaped web on a leaf with its legs folded inward, and feeding on a cockroach (Blattodea) of about 20 mm in length and which appeared to be dead (Figs. 1 & 2). After two hours, the cockroach was still not fully ingested.



Fig. 1. Dorsal view of the crab spider eating a cockroach. Fig. 2. A fronto-lateral view of the spider, with a dorsal view of the prey cockroach (Photographs by: Luke Ang).

Remarks: The featured observation appears to represent the first record of *Phrynarachne decipiens* in Singapore where previously only its congeners *Phrynarachne ceylonica* and *Phrynarachne tuberosa* were known to occur (see Koh et al., 2022). *Phrynarachne decipiens* has been recorded in Borneo, Sumatra, Java and Australia (Koh & Bay, 2019). Spiders of the genus *Phrynarachne* resemble a blob of bird dropping, and even smell like feces or urine. This may help it attract and ambush prey, and avoid the notice of predators (Koh & Bay, 2019).

Literature cited:

- Koh JKH, Court DJ, Ang CSP & Ng PYC (2022) A Photographic Guide to Singapore Spiders, National Parks Board, Singapore, x + 774 pp.
- Koh JKH & Bay N (2019) Borneo Spiders. A Photographic Field Guide. Sabah Forestry Department, Sandakan, Sabah, Malaysia, 497 pp.