






# FIRST RECORD OF *ARANEUS ALSINE* (WALCKENAER, 1802) (ARANEAE, ARANEIDAE) FROM KOSOVO

**BLERTINA ISLAMI<sup>1</sup>, KRENARE IBRAHIMI<sup>2</sup>, BLEARTA KASTRATI<sup>3</sup>,  
DONARD GECI<sup>4\*</sup>, HALIL IBRAHIMI<sup>5</sup> & ASTRIT BILALLI<sup>6</sup>**

<sup>1-5</sup>Department of Biology, Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences, University of Prishtina, Mother Teresa street p.n., 10000 Prishtina, Republic of Kosovo (<sup>1</sup>e-mail: blertina.islami@student.uni-pr.edu ; <sup>2</sup>e-mail: krenare.ibrahimi2@student.uni-pr.edu ; <sup>3</sup>e-mail: blearta.kastrati@student.uni-pr.edu ; <sup>4</sup>e-mail: donard.geci@uni-pr.edu ; <sup>5</sup>e-mail: halil.ibrahimi@uni-pr.edu 

<sup>6</sup>University of Peja "Haxhi Zeka", Faculty of Agribusiness, Street "UÇK" 30000 Pejë, Republic of Kosovo (E-mail: astrit.bilalli@unhz.edu 

**Islami, B., Ibrahim, K., Kastrati, B., Geci, D., Ibrahim, H. & Bilalli, A.: First record of *Araneus alsine* (Walckenaer, 1802) (Araneae, Araneidae) from Kosovo. Nat. Croat., Vol. 33, No. 2, 387-390, Zagreb, 2024.**

The strawberry spider *Araneus alsine* (Walckenaer, 1802) is a Palearctic species that has been reported from most European countries, including several in the Balkans. In this contribution, for the first time, we report the presence of this species in Kosovo. A single specimen was observed on 24 August, 2023 in the Blinajë hunting reserve, in the municipality of Lipjan. The specimen was found on grass near a forest.

**Key words:** Strawberry spider, Kosovo, Araneidae

**Islami, B., Ibrahim, K., Kastrati, B., Geci, D., Ibrahim, H. & Bilalli, A.: Prvi nalaz pauka *Araneus alsine* (Walckenaer, 1802) (Araneae, Araneidae) s Kosova. Nat. Croat., Vol. 33, No. 2, 387-390, Zagreb, 2024.**

*Araneus alsine* (Walckenaer, 1802) palearktička je vrsta koja je zabilježena u većini europskih zemalja, uključujući nekolicinu na Balkanu. U ovom radu prvi put izvještavamo o prisutnosti te vrste na Kosovu. Jedan primjerak opažen je 24. kolovoza 2023. godine u lovištu Blinajë, u općini Lipjan. Primjerak je pronađen na travi u blizini šume.

**Ključne riječi:** Kosovo, Araneidae

The spider fauna of Kosovo remains poorly known, indicating the possibility that there are many species yet to be identified. Currently, 245 spider species are known in Kosovo, including this study (NENTWIG *et al.*, 2024), most of them recorded in recent years (VRENOZI & JÄGER, 2013; GECI & NAUMOVA, 2021a; 2021b; GRAPCI-KOTORI *et al.*, 2022). Data from Kosovo can also be found in MAMMOLA *et al.* (2018) and BERISHA & GECI (2023). In Kosovo, there are 15 genera from the Araneidae family, with six species belonging to the genus *Araneus* (NENTWIG *et al.*, 2024).

The *Araneus alsine* (Walckenaer, 1802) body coloration ranges from orange to bright red and sometimes with some white spots on the abdomen. Their legs have black bands

\*Corresponding author: donard.geci@uni-pr.edu

and are covered with spines that help them to catch and handle their prey (NENTWIG *et al.*, 2024). The aim of this study is to document the occurrence of a flagship spider species in Kosovo, contributing to the overall understanding of spider biodiversity in the region.

During this investigation, a single female specimen was observed in a meadow with dense vegetation and exposed to sunlight. This observation and the following photography occurred within the Blinajë hunting reserve, located in the Lipjan municipality. (Figs. 1. and 2).

The species has been recorded from most Balkans countries and other European countries such as: Norway (AAKRA & HAUGE, 2003), Austria (NENTWIG *et al.*, 2024), Belarus (IVANOV, 2013), Latvia (CERA, 2018), Finland (KOPONEN *et al.*, 2016), Denmark (NENTWIG *et al.*, 2024), Sweden (KRONESTEDT, 2001), Croatia (BRIGIĆ *et al.*, 2009), Czech Republic (ŘEŽÁČ & RŮŽIČKA, 2022), Estonia (VILBASTE, 1987), Georgia (OTTO, 2022), United Kingdom (LAVERY, 2019), France (NENTWIG *et al.*, 2023), Germany (WIEHLE, 1931), Bulgaria (BLAGOEV *et al.*, 2018), Slovenia (KUNTNER & KOSTANJŠEK, 2015), Hungary (SAMU & SZINETÁR, 1999), Belgium (BOSMANS & VAN KEER, 2017), Italy (PANTINI & ISAIA, 2019), North Macedonia (NENTWIG *et al.*, 2024), Albania (DELTSHEV *et al.*, 2011) and Montenegro (NENTWIG *et al.*, 2024). Currently, the only neighboring countries where this species has not yet been reported are Bosnia and Herzegovina, Greece and the European part of Turkey.

In terms of studies to date, the spider fauna of Kosovo remains poorly investigated. However, as more studies are published, especially in recent years, the documentation is expected to increase (GECI & NAUMOVA, 2021ab; GRAPCI-KOTORI *et al.*, 2022; GECI *et al.*, 2023; IBRAHIMI *et al.*, 2024).

Received October 6, 2023



Fig. 1. Distribution of *Araneus alsine* in Kosovo.



Fig. 2. *Araneus alsine* photographed in the Blinajë hunting reserve, Lipjan municipality, Kosovo (Photo: K. Ibrahim)

## REFERENCES

- AAKRA, K. & HAUGE, E., 2003: Checklist of Norwegian spiders (Arachnida: Araneae), including Svalbard and Jan Mayen. *Norwegian Journal of Entomology*, **50**, 109–129.
- BERISHA, N. & GECI, D., 2023: The analysis of the influence of grazing intensity on the diversity and abundance of plants and spiders (Arachnida: Araneae). *European Journal of Environmental Sciences*, **13**(1), 31–38.
- BLAGOEV, G., DELTSHEV, C., LAZAROV, S. & NAUMOVA, M., 2018: The Spiders (Araneae) of Bulgaria. National Museum of Natural History, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences. Retrieved from <https://www.nmnh.com/spiders-bulgaria/>
- BRIGIĆ, A., ALEGRO, A. & ŠEGOTA, V. 2009: *Araneus alsine* (Walckenaer, 1802), (Araneidae, Araneae, Arachnida a rare and likely threatened spider of the Croatian fauna. *Natura Croatica*, **18**(1), 39–48.
- BOSMANS, R. & VAN KEER, K., 2017: Een herziene soortenlijst van de Belgische spinnen (Araneae). *Nieuwsbrief van de Belgische Arachnologische Vereniging*, **32**, 39–69.
- CERA, I., 2018: The checklist of Latvian spiders (Arachnida: Araneae). *Environmental and Experimental Biology*, **16**, 139–152.
- DELTSHEV, C., VRENOSI, B., BLAGOEV, G. & LAZAROV, S., 2011: Spiders of Albania – faunistic and zoogeographical review (Arachnida: Araneae). *Acta Zoologica Bulgarica*, **63**(2), 125–144.
- GECI, D. & NAUMOVA, M., 2021a: A Preliminary Checklist of the Spiders of Kosovo (Arachnida: Araneae). *Ecologia Balcanica, Special Edition* **4**, 11–28.
- GECI, D. & NAUMOVA, M., 2021b: The Spotted Orb-weaver *Neoscona byzanthina* (Pavesi, 1876) – An Enigmatic but Common Species on the Balkans (Araneae: Araneidae). *Ecologia Balkanica, Special Edition* **4**, 1–9.
- GRAPCI-KOTORI, L., GECI, D., NAUMOVA, M., IBRAHIMI, H., BILALLI, A., MUSLIU, M., GASHI, A. & KASUMAJ, E., 2022: Spiders from Sharr Mountain – new faunistic data (Arachnida: Araneae). *Natura Croatica* **31**, 335–350.
- GECI, D., NAUMOVA, M., IBRAHIMI, H., GRAPCI-KOTORI, L., GASHI, A., BILALLI, A. & MUSLIU, M., 2023: Contribution to spider fauna (Arachnida: Araneae) from Bjeshkët and Nemuna mountains (Kosovo). *Natura Croatica* **32**, 525–547.
- IBRAHIMI, K., ISLAMI, B., KASTRATI, B., GECI, D., BILALLI, A. & IBRAHIMI, H., 2024: New findings and an updated checklist of Araneidae (Arachnida: Araneae) from Kosovo. *Journal of Insect Biodiversity and Systematics*, **10**(3), 547–555. <https://doi.org/10.61186/JIBS.10.3.547>
- IVANOV, V., 2013: The checklist of Belarusian spiders (Arachnida, Araneae). *Zoology and Ecology*, **23**(4), 293–311. Retrieved from <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/21658005.2013.862061>
- KOPONEN, S., FRITZÉN, N. R. & PAJUNEN, T., 2016: Checklist of spiders in Finland (Araneae), 6th version. Retrieved from [http://biolcoll.utu.fi/arach/checklist\\_of\\_spiders\\_in\\_Finland.htm](http://biolcoll.utu.fi/arach/checklist_of_spiders_in_Finland.htm)
- KRONESTEDT, T., 2001: Checklist of Swedish Spiders, Preliminary version (February 2001).
- KUNTNER, M. & KOSTANJŠEK, R., 2015: Araneae Sloveniae: a national spider species checklist. *ZooKeys*, **474**, 1–91. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.3897/zookeys.474.8474>
- LAVERY, A., 2019: A revised checklist of the spiders of Great Britain and Ireland. *Arachnology*, **18**(3), 196–212. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.13156/arac.2019.18.3.196>
- MAMMOLA, S., CARDOSO, P., RIBERA, C., PAVLEK, M. & ISAIA, M., 2018: A synthesis on cave – dwelling spiders in Europe. *Journal of Zoological Systematics and Evolutionary Research*, **56**(1), 301–316.
- NENTWIG, W., BLICK, T., BOSMANS, R., GLOOR, D., HÄNGGI, A. & KROPF, C., 2024: Spiders of Europe. Version 28.06.2024 Online at <https://www.araneae.nmbe.ch>, accessed on 28.06.2024. <https://doi.org/10.24436/1>.
- OTTO, S., 2022: Caucasian Spiders. A faunistic database on the spiders of the Caucasus. Retrieved from <https://caucasus-spiders.info/>
- PANTINI, P. & ISAIA, M., 2019: Araneae.it: the online Catalog of Italian spiders, with addenda on other Arachnid Orders occurring in Italy (Arachnida: Araneae, Opiliones, Palpigradi, Pseudoscorpionida, Scorpiones, Solifugae). *Fragmenta Entomologica* **51**(2), 127–152.
- ŘEŽÁČ, M. & RŮŽIČKA, V., 2022: List of spiders of the Czech Republic. Seznam pavouků České republiky. Retrieved from <https://www.arachnology.cz/seznam-pavouku-cr-26.html>
- SAMU, F. & SZINETÁR, C., 1999: Bibliographic check list of the Hungarian spider fauna. *Bulletin of the British Arachnological Society* **11**(5), 161–184.

- VILBASTE, A., 1987: Eesti Ämblikud (Aranei). Anoteeritud nimestik. Estonian spiders (Aranei). An annotated check list. Valgus, Tallinn. 113 pp. & 512 maps on 67 unpag. pages
- VRENOZI, B. & JÄGER, P., 2013: Spiders (Araneae) from Albania and Kosovo in the collection of Carl Friedrich Roewer. *Arachnologische Mitteilungen* **46**, 17–26. doi:10.5431/aramit4604
- WIEHLE, H., 1931: Spinnentiere oder Arachnoidea. 27. Familie. Araneidae. In: *Die Tierwelt Deutschlands*, **23**, 47–136.