

Important scientific progress for arachnology at Parc national de la Yamaska

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Spiders have not been studied extensively in most regions of the world. Yet they play a major ecological role, given their incredible number, the diversity of their behaviour and their ability to live in almost every environment. In Québec, the known araneofauna comprises 654 species, broken down into 27 families. To this list must be added some fifty probable species, which have yet to be surveyed in the province. A major survey was carried out at Parc national de la Yamaska in 2006 in order to draw up an exhaustive wildlife register of this group.

Indeed, 2,200 samples from pitfall traps, beating, screening and bedding extraction operations were collected in four typical habitats of the park's natural landscape. This harvest yielded more than 8,000 adult specimens. The park's southern location and its plant mosaic held the promise of surprising finds. The scope of the discoveries exceeded all expectations...

The diversity of the park's araneofauna is reflected in 200 species. Several of these species represent invaluable distribution sightings for the arachnologic knowledge of North America. For example, *Clubiona quebecana* (*Clubionidæ*), *Elaver excepta* (*Clubionidæ*), *Habrocestrum parvulum* (*Salticidæ*) as well as a few other species had only been surveyed once or twice across Québec. Even more noteworthy, five species within this group were surveyed for the first time in the province. They are *Araneus guttulatus* (*Araneidæ*), *Theridion alabamense* (*Theridiidæ*), *Dipæna appalachia* (*Theridiidæ*), *Admestina wheeleri* (*Salticidæ*) and *Calodipæna incredula* (*Mysmenidæ*). The discovery of this latter species reveals a remarkable extension of its range; it had only been surveyed in Florida and Texas. What is more, it constitutes the first mention of the *Mysmenidæ* family for Québec, and the first mention of the *Calodipæna* genus for Canada.

The *Linyphiidæ* family is the park's most diversified family, with 62 species surveyed. It is in this group that the discoveries are the most interesting. Most spiders of this family only measure a few millimeters in size at the adult stage. Two species are entirely new for the science and consequently have no name. One of them belongs to the *Agyneta* genus, whereas the other belongs to an unknown genus, which is probably new. A formal recognition process has been undertaken in the scientific field of systematics. One of these two species of *Linyphiidæ* will be described shortly and will bear the name of *Yamaskensis*, in honour of Parc national de la Yamaska, type locality associated with this new spider. It is time to update the official registers! Québec's araneofauna now comprises 661 species, making up 28 families.

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Paquin, P. et Dupérré, N. (2003). *Guide d'identification des Araignées (Araneæ) du Québec*.
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