



BANDED-LEGGED GOLDEN ORB-WEB SPIDER

banded-legged nephila (English); gebande-poot goue wawielweb-spinnekop (Afrikaans); isicabucabu esinemilenze emithenda sobulwembu obuyindilingo obusagolide (isiZulu); sekgo sa maoto matsho sa tepo e sedikedikwe ye mmala wa kgauta (seSotho).

Nephilidae (*Nephila senegalensis*)

DESCRIPTION

Size: females large (30-40 mm); males much smaller.

Female: Colour: colour pattern distinct; abdomen bright yellow with dark pattern (Fig. 1); ventrally yellow with dark markings (Fig. 3); legs banded (Fig. 1); sternum yellow (Fig. 3). **Carapace:** longer than wide; **eyes:** 8 in 2 evenly spaced rows; **abdomen:** large, elongated and cylindrical; **legs:** long and slender, tufts of setae on tibiae of legs I, II and IV absent (Fig. 3). **Male:** much smaller (Fig. 2), uniformly pale in colour. **Juveniles:** with pattern on abdomen differing from females.

HABITAT

Found in the grassland, savanna and open forest, and are frequently encountered in gardens.

BEHAVIOUR

These spiders build large (1-1.5m in diameter) orb-webs. The viscid spiral of the web is yellowish golden which is characteristic of the nephilas. The radii of the web are pulled out of their direct course to give the web a notched appearance. The supporting lines are very strong, and some resistance is felt when one wanders into them. The spiders make use of the same web over a long period of time, replacing only the viscid lines. The web of older spiders are half a circle, while in the young ones the orb is more complete. The small male is usually found on the edge of the web of the female. The spiders live for about one year and the adults are very commonly found during the summer months. They prey on a wide range of flying insects.

DISTRIBUTION

Distributed throughout Africa, but more commonly found in the warmer humid regions. They are widely distribution throughout South Africa (Fig. 4).

MEDICAL IMPORTANCE

There is no information available about the effect of their venom on humans.

Compiled by: Ansie Dippenaar-Schoeman and Robin Lyle
ARC-Plant Protection Research Institute

Contact: LyleR@arc.agric.za

Website: www.arc.agric.za

SANSA—South African National Survey of Arachnida

