

brushlegged wolf spider *Schizocosa ocreata*

Kingdom: Animalia

Phylum: Arthropoda

Class: Chelicerata

Order: Araneae

Family: Lycosidae

ILLINOIS STATUS common, native

FEATURES

Like all wolf spiders, the brushlegged wolf spider has four, large eyes in a trapezoid shape on the top of the carapace. The two median eyes in this group of four are the largest and face forward. The two smaller eyes in this group of four are set behind the two central eyes, facing to the side or backwards. In front of these four eyes is a row of four, smaller eyes. Females are about 0.29 to 0.41 inch in total body length. Males are smaller 0.24 to 0.39 inch in total body length. The general body color is brown with a lighter-colored band longitudinally in the center of the cephalothorax and abdomen. The dark areas on the sides of the cephalothorax and abdomen may appear to be black. The male's front legs are black with clusters of setae.

BEHAVIORS

This species is found in leaf litter in upland deciduous forests, forest edges and open fields near woodlands. It hunts during the day and at night. Adults are active from April through October. Subadults are the overwintering stage. They mature in spring. Wolf spiders have good vision. They perform courtship rituals like waving the legs or palps with making sounds created by vibrating body parts against each other or a surface or object they are near. Wolf spiders generally do not build a web but use a dragline of silk for communication. The female builds an egg sac and attaches it to her spinnerets. She carries it with her as she hunts and may move into or out of sunlight to help control the temperature of the developing eggs. After the eggs hatch, the young climb onto her abdomen, and she carries them for a week or two while they complete their development. Wolf spiders hunt by waiting for prey to appear, then rushing out to capture it. If no prey appears for a while, the spider may move to a new location. Small prey items are bitten immediately. Larger prey may be enclosed in a basket made by the spider's legs and then bitten. The diet consists mainly of insects and other, smaller wolf spiders.

HABITATS

Aquatic Habitats

none

Woodland Habitats

upland deciduous forests

Prairie and Edge Habitats

edge

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