

dotted wolf spider *Rabidosa punctulate*

Kingdom: Animalia

Phylum: Arthropoda

Class: Chelicerata

Order: Araneae

Family: Lycosidae

ILLINOIS STATUS common, native

FEATURES

Like all wolf spiders, the dotted 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 0.43 to 0.67 inch in total body length. Males are 0.51 to 0.59 inch in total body length. The general body color is light brown. The cephalothorax has an alternating pattern of light- and dark-brown stripes. The abdomen has a dark band in the center that does not show any spots. The underside of the abdomen has numerous brown spots.

BEHAVIORS

This is a nocturnal species that is found in tall grasses and weeds. Adults are present in the fall of the year with mating in November. Females overwinter and lay eggs in March. The adult female carries her egg sac for 30-40 days before the young emerge. They ride on her back for one to two weeks before leaving to live independently. 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

none

Prairie and Edge Habitats

black soil prairie; dolomite prairie; edge; gravel prairie; hill prairie; sand prairie; shrub prairie

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