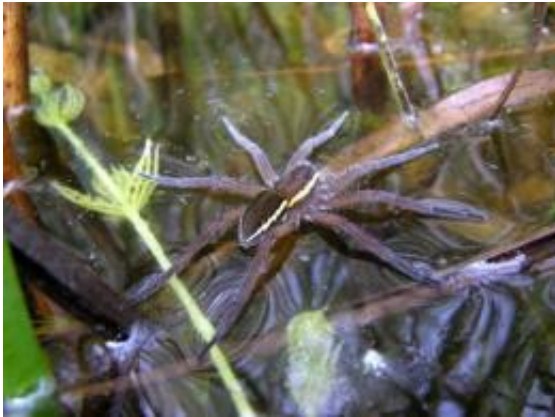


Thousands of baby spiders released in British countryside

October 22 2010



A female fen raft spider. Thousands of baby spiders bred in a kitchen will be released into the countryside this week in a bid to revive an endangered species, a government biodiversity agency said.

Thousands of baby spiders bred in a kitchen will be released into the British countryside this week in a bid to revive an endangered species, a government biodiversity agency said Friday.

Some 3,000 baby fen raft [spiders](#) reared by ecologist Helen Smith will be let loose in the Castle Marshes nature reserve in Suffolk, eastern England, according to Natural England.

The fen raft spider is classed as endangered in Britain and can be found at only two sites in England and one in Wales.

The spiders are large -- the body of an adult female can be as long as 23 millimetres (0.9 inches) -- with distinctive white, cream or yellow stripes across the abdomen.

The baby [arachnids](#) were reared in individual laboratory test tubes to prevent them from attacking each other, and were hand-fed with [fruit flies](#).

Smith said raising the creatures was an "exhausting" job.

"At one stage I was up until 2:00 am, seven days a week, feeding flies to hungry young spiders in my kitchen," she said.

"I'm excited and relieved to see them making their own way in the world -- and I can finally have my kitchen back."

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Citation: Thousands of baby spiders released in British countryside (2010, October 22) retrieved 11 May 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2010-10-thousands-baby-spiders-british-countryside.html>

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