

## 2 miniature spider species discovered in Giant Panda Sanctuaries of China

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This image shows one of the newly discovered species -- *Mysmena wawuensis*.  
Credit: Shuqiang Li

Two new minute spider species have been discovered from the Sichuan and Chongqing, China. The tiny new spiders are both less than 2 mm in length, with *Trogloneta yuensis* being as little as 1.01 mm and *Mysmena wawuensis* measured to be the even tinier 0.75 mm, which classes it among the smallest spiders known. The two species described in the

open access journal *Zookeys* both have a bizarre body shape with disproportionately big spherical posterior body.

The family Mysmenidae to which the new species belong is composed of minute eight-eyed spiders. There are a relatively small number of these spiders recognized worldwide despite scientists expect that many new species are still awaiting discovery. Mysmenidae are one of the least studied groups among orb-weaving spiders which is believed to be due to their small size.

Being extremely minute, up to 2 mm in total and having cryptic lifestyle these creatures become rather hard to find. The spiders live in moist leaf litter, and their obscure places such as moss and even caves and they prefer very humid habitats. Spiders from this family are believed to widely throughout the tropical and [subtropical regions](#).



This image shows a view from the Wawu Mt. National Forest Park, the natural habitat of the newly discovered species. Credit: Shuqiang Li



The Wawu Mt. National Forest Park is the home of the two miniature spider species. Credit: Shuqiang Li

The two new species found in China are considered endemic to their type localities in the Sichuan and Chongqing. The region of Wawu Mt. National Forest Park, where *Mysmena wawuensis* was discovered is also remarkable for holding a small population of wild [giant panda](#) of about 10 individuals. A recent survey shows that 1206 individuals of giant panda are currently living in Sichuan, which makes the region remarkable with about 76% of the whole wild panda population in China

being concentrated there attesting for the great biodiversity of the province.

**More information:** Lin Y, Li S (2013) Two new species of the genera Mysmena and Trogloneta (Mysmenidae, Araneae) from Southwestern China. ZooKeys 303: 33–51. [doi: 10.3897/zookeys.303.4808](https://doi.org/10.3897/zookeys.303.4808)

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