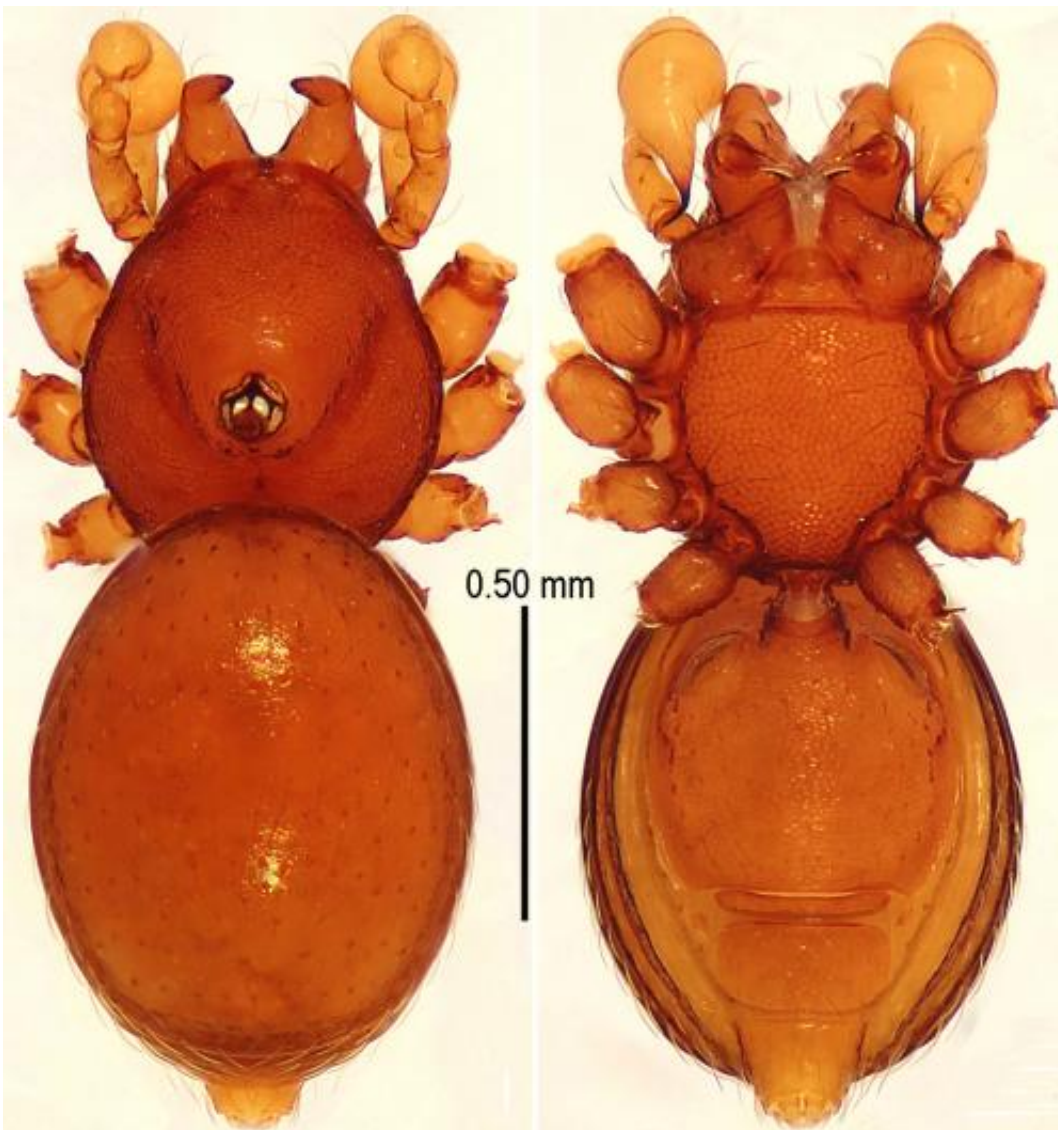


Lurking in the darkness of Chinese caves five new species of armored spiders come to light

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This image shows the male holotype of *Sinamma oxycera*, one of the newly described species. Credit: Shuqiang Li

Armored spiders are medium to small species that derive their name from the complex pattern of the plates covering their abdomen strongly resembling body armor. Lurking in the darkness of caves In Southeast China, scientists discover and describe five new species of these exciting group of spiders. The study was published in the open access journal *ZooKeys*.

The common name armored spiders is given to the engaging family Tetrablemmidae. Distinguished by their peculiar armor-like abdominal pattern, these tropical and subtropical spiders are mainly collected from litter and soil, but like the newly described species some live in caves. Some cave species, but also some soil inhabitants, show typical adaptations of cave spiders, such as loss of eyes. The genus *Tetrablemma*, for example, to which two of the [new species](#) belong, is distinguished by having only 4 eyes.

All these new spiders are collected from the South China Karst, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The South China Karst spans the provinces of Guangxi, Guizhou, and Yunnan. It is noted for its karst features and landscapes as well as rich biodiversity. UNESCO describes the South China Karst as "unrivalled in terms of the diversity of its karst features and landscapes."

Colleagues from the Chinese Academy of Sciences under the leadership of Professor Shuqiang LI have investigated more than 2000 caves in the South China Karst. Several hundred new species of cave spiders are reported by Shuqiang Li and colleagues. As a result, the total known [spider species](#) of China increased from 2300 species to 4300 species in the last 10 years.

More information: Lin Y, Li S (2014) New cave-dwelling armored spiders (Araneae, Tetrablemmidae) from Southwest China. *ZooKeys* 388: 35. [DOI: 10.3897/zookeys.388.5735](https://doi.org/10.3897/zookeys.388.5735)

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