

From Darwin to moramora ('take it easy'): Ten new subsocial spider species from Madagascar

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A Madagascan cobweb spider species, *A. darwini*, named after the father of evolutionary biology Charles Darwin. Credit: Ingi Agnarsson

Ten subsocial cobweb spider species were discovered in a research on

nearly 400 Madagascan colonies, conducted by Dr. Agnarsson's team. Most of them are single forest endemics and belong to one genus, *Anelosimus*.

The number of newly found [species](#) in an otherwise ongoingly deforested area such as Madagascar triggers the need for additional samplings, the research team point out.

In their report the scientists also stress on the fact that the extraordinary biodiversity there is still "mostly unexplored and undescribed" in terms of "many arthropod groups, such as spiders." The [California Academy of Sciences](#) is one of the few institutions to have thoroughly looked into Madagascan spider research.

Curiously, five of the new species bare the names of the staple figures within the field of evolutionary [biology](#): Wallace, Huxley, Buffon, Hooker and Lamarck. The *Anelosimus darwini* derives its name from the father of [evolutionary biology](#) Charles Darwin himself.

Yet, another one out of the ten species, *Anelosimus moramora*, got its name from the Madagascan motto 'no rush' or 'take it easy.'

Dr. Agnarsson led the research in the biodiversity hotspot of Madagascar on behalf of both the [University of Vermont's Biology department](#) and the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History. The study can be found in the open-access journal [ZooKeys](#).



Madagascan cobweb spider species, *Anelosimus moramora*, named after the Madagascan motto 'no rush' or 'take it easy'. Credit: Ingi Agnarsson



A female Madagascan cobweb spider, *Anelosimus ata*, and her web. Credit: Ingi Agnarsson

More information: Agnarsson I, Jencik BB, Veve GM, Hanitriniaina S, Agostini D, Goh SP, Pruitt J, Kuntner M (2015) Systematics of the Madagascar *Anelosimus* spiders: remarkable local richness and endemism, and dual colonization from the Americas. *ZooKeys* 509: 13-52. [DOI: 10.3897/zookeys.509.8897](https://doi.org/10.3897/zookeys.509.8897)

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