

New species of trapdoor spider confirmed in Australia

March 21 2023, by Bob Yirka



Credit: Jeremy Wilson.

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A trio of arachnologists at Queensland Museum Collections and Research Center, has described the rediscovery of a species of giant trapdoor spider believed to live in hidden parts of Queensland, Australia. In their study, reported in *Journal of Arachnology*, Michael Rix, Jeremy Wilson and Paul Oliver conducted a four-year field study looking for evidence of the spider and conducted a DNA analysis using specimens in the museum and some found in the field.

Four years ago, workers at the Queensland Museum discovered specimens of a previously unknown species of giant trapdoor [spider](#) in the arachnid collection. Intrigued by the find, the researchers in this new effort instigated a years-long field study aimed at finding live examples. They found specimens near Monto and Eidsvold, which are in the Brigalow Belt of inland Queensland, Australia. The team then conducted a taxonomic study of the spider to determine its characteristics.

The [specimens](#) in the museum archive were obtained in the early to mid-20th century but had not been labeled or identified. Thus, it was left to the trio to give the species a name; they chose *Euoplos dignitas*—from the Latin for "dignity" or "greatness," and the association to a connected project called DIG. The name was chosen due to the large size of the species—the female was found to grow up to 50 millimeters long. Comparison of its features and DNA with other spiders in Australia showed that the newly rediscovered species was unique.

The [new species](#), like many of its cousins, is a true trapdoor spider, in that it creates a cap to cover its burrow that looks like a trap door. Also, like many of its cousins, it makes its home in holes dug in the ground in woodland areas. It is not considered to be a threat because of its secretive and shy nature. The research team notes that much of its [natural habitat](#) has been lost to land clearing, which means that the newly rediscovered species is likely endangered.

More information: Michael G. Rix et al, A new species of Endangered giant trapdoor spider (Mygalomorphae: Idiopidae: Euoplos) from the Brigalow Belt of inland Queensland, Australia, *The Journal of Arachnology* (2023). [DOI: 10.1636/JoA-S-21-056](https://doi.org/10.1636/JoA-S-21-056)

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