

# New spider genus named after pop band ABBA

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*Abba transversa*. Credit: Volker W. Framenau

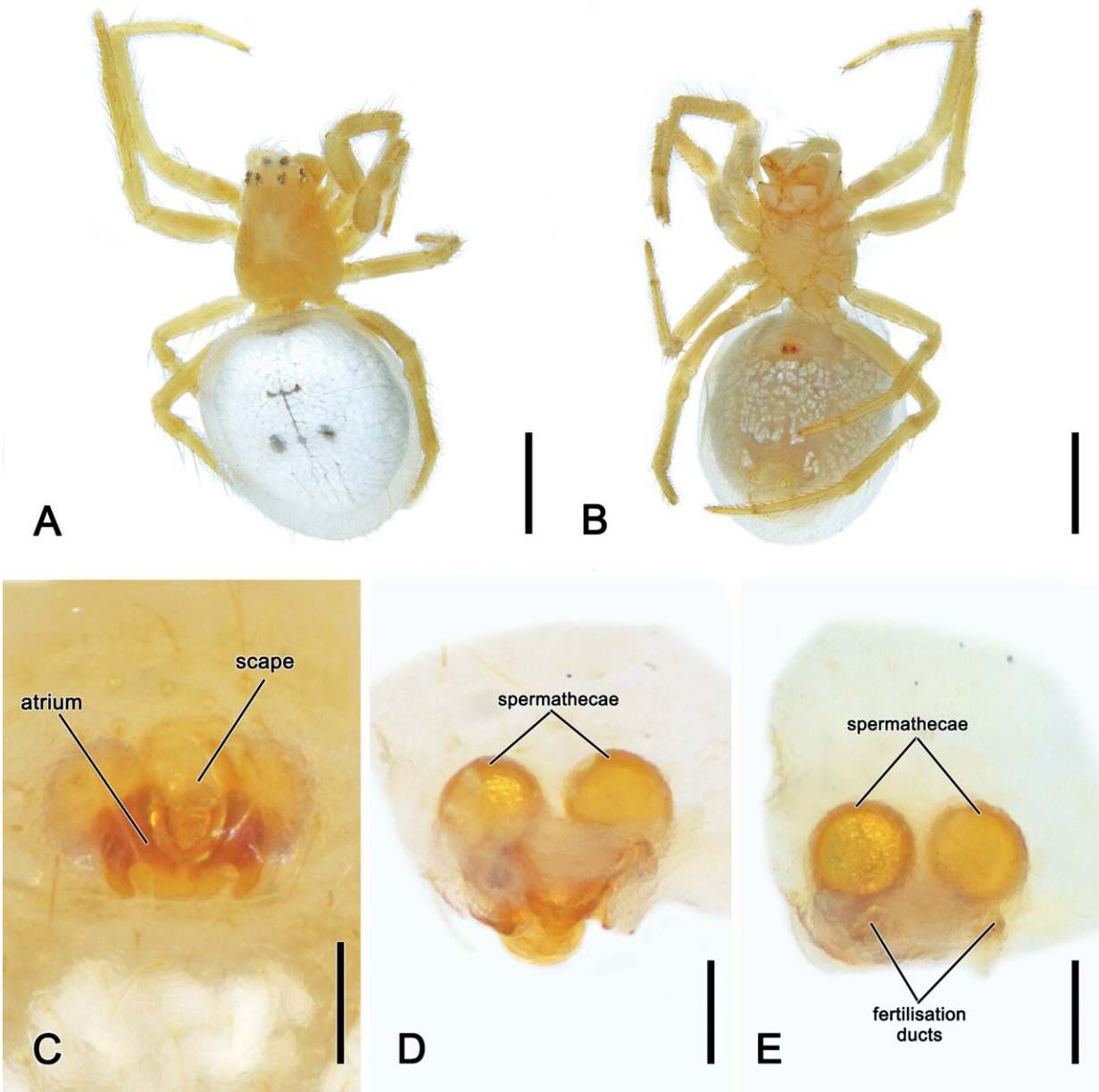
Spiders of the family Araneidae are known for building vertical orbicular webs to catch prey. They can be easily identified by their eye pattern, the abdomen normally overlapping the carapace, and complex

genitalia. The family currently has 188 genera and 3,119 species worldwide.

Two scientists from Murdoch University in Perth (Australia), Dr. Pedro Castanheira and Dr. Volker Framenau, have described a new [spider](#) genus of Araneids following a comprehensive study of orb-weaving spiders found in Australian zoological collections. They named it after one of their favorite bands, the Swedish pop group ABBA, paying tribute to the band members Agnetha Fältskog, Björn Ulvaeus, Benny Andersson, and Anni-Frid Lyngstad.

The band's "songs and subsequent musicals 'Mamma Mia!' (2008) and 'Mamma Mia—Here We Go Again!' (2018), provided hours of entertainment for the authors," they explain in their study, which was published in the journal *Evolutionary Systematics*.

The new genus is composed of a relatively small single species (3-4 mm), *Abba transversa* (Rainbow, 1912), whose specimens are currently known from the coastal area of New South Wales and Queensland. It is differentiated from other species within the family by the presence of two [dark spots](#) in the middle of abdomen and by the thick macrosetae on the first pair of legs of the males.



*Abba transversa* (Rainbow, 1912) comb. nov., female (QM S88101). A, dorsal habitus; B, ventral habitus; C, epigyne, ventral view; D, internal genitalia, ventral view; E, internal genitalia, dorsal view. Scale bars: 1 mm (A, B); 0.1 mm (C, D, E). Credit: *Evolutionary Systematics* (2023). DOI: 10.3897/evolsyst.7.98015

The description comes after 15 years of scientific work, with the

researchers looking at 12,000 records in Australian museums and overseas collections.

"Describing new taxa is vital for conservation management plans to assess biodiversity and protect forests areas across Australia," says study author Dr. Pedro Castanheira. "Currently, 80% of Australian spider [species](#) are unknown, and many of the described ones are misplaced in different genera, like *Abba transversa* used to be."

**More information:** Pedro de S. Castanheira et al, *Abba*, a new monotypic genus of orb-weaving spiders (Araneae, Araneidae) from Australia, *Evolutionary Systematics* (2023). [DOI: 10.3897/evolsyst.7.98015](#)

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