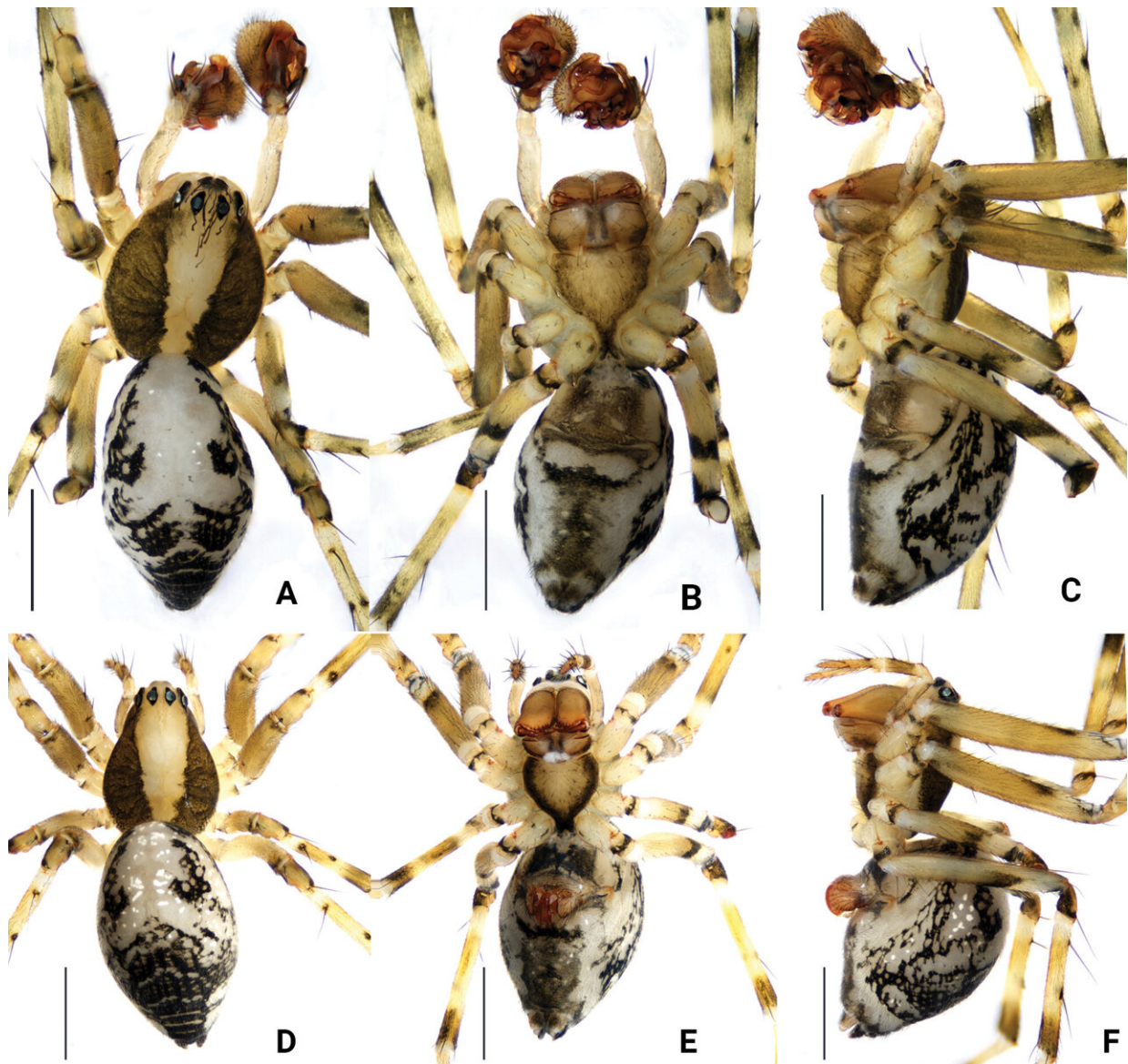


Eight-eyed cave creature with unique genitalia discovered as new species in China

December 6 2023, by Aspen Pflughoeft, The Charlotte Observer



Floronia huishuiensis Zhou & Xu, sp. nov., habitus A–C male holotype D–F

female paratype A, D dorsal view B, E ventral view C, F lateral view. Scale bars: 1 mm. Credit: *ZooKeys* (2023). DOI: 10.3897/zookeys.1185.109285

As light filtered into a cave in southeastern China, an eight-eyed creature moved around underneath a rock. Despite its small size, the animal caught the attention of nearby scientists. It turned out to be a new species.

Researchers ventured into Baiyan Cave to survey [local wildlife](#) in 2020, according to a study [published](#) Dec. 1 in the journal *ZooKeys*.

Just inside from the cave's "large opening," researchers found four small spiders "under large rocks," the study said. Scientists took a closer look at the arachnids and realized they'd discovered a [new species](#): *Floronia huishuiensis*, or the Huishui dwarf spider.

Huishui dwarf spiders are considered "small," reaching less than 0.1 inches in length, the study said. They have eight eyes, eight brownish-yellow legs and a marbled black and white body, photos show.

Male Huishui dwarf spiders have unique genitalia, known as pedipalps, the study said. Pedipalps are the shorter front appendages that function both as sensory organs and reproductive organs.

Close-up photos show the pedipalps of male Huishui dwarf spiders. Overall, the pedipalps look like boxing gloves, with researchers describing one distinct part as being "hook-shaped."

Huishui dwarf spiders were found between about 30 feet and about 60 feet into the [cave](#) and seen weaving webs underneath rocks, the study said.

Researchers said they named the new species after Huishui County, the area where it was discovered and the only place these spiders have been found so far. Huishui County is in the southwestern province of Guizhou and about 1,000 miles southwest of Shanghai.

The new species was identified by its genitalia and other subtle physical features, the study said. Researchers did not provide a DNA analysis of the new species.

The research team included Guchun Zhou, Weifeng Du, Chengxiang Xu and Muhammad Irfan.

More information: Guchun Zhou et al, A new species of *Floronia* Simon, 1887 from Baiyan Cave in Guizhou Province, China (Araneae, Linyphiidae), *ZooKeys* (2023). [DOI: 10.3897/zookeys.1185.109285](https://doi.org/10.3897/zookeys.1185.109285)

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