Oonopidae: *Scaphiella*

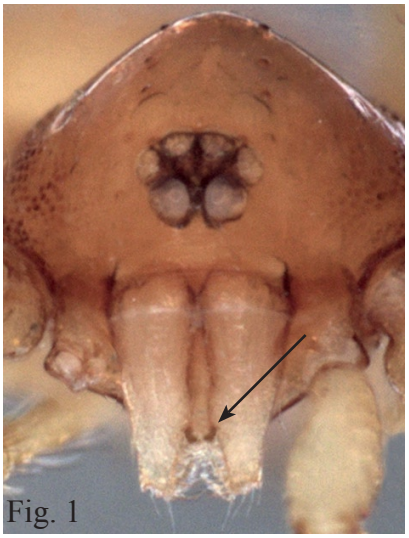
by Norm Platnick & Nadine Dupérré

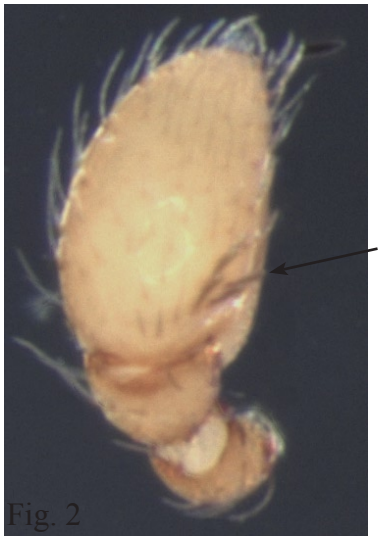
Scaphiella is a Neotropical genus, found from southern Mexico and southern Florida to southern Peru. Recently revised (http://digitallibrary.amnh.org/dspace/handle/2246/604), the genus currently includes 61 species, including several from the Caribbean islands:

Cuba: one described species, endemic, but recent collections indicate that there are probably several more
Jamaica: one endemic
Virgin Islands: three endemics (St. John; Virgin Gorda; St. Croix)
Lesser Antilles: one species found in Dominica, Martinique, Montserrat, and St. Vincent
Guadaloupe: one endemic
Saba: one endemic
Curaçao: one endemic
Trinidad: two species shared with Venezuela, plus two endemics

Small spiders (0.9-2.2 mm) in length, males and females are brightly colored (yellow to orange). Females are easy to recognize; they have a taco-shaped scutum that covers the sides and venter of the abdomen. Males have a similar scutum, but also have another scutum that covers the dorsal surface of the abdomen. They are likely to be confused only with members of the sister genus, *Escaphiella*, which is more widely distributed but is known in the Caribbean islands only from two species shared with the mainland (one in Jamaica, the other in the Cayman Islands, Jamaica, and Curaçao). Specimens of *Scaphiella* differ in having conspicuous, black macrosetae on the anterior surface of the chelicerae and basally on the prolateral side of the palpal tarsus in both sexes.

Search strategy: as with most oonopids, these animals are collected efficiently only by concentrating leaf litter through a sifter. The concentrated litter can be sorted by hand, or run through portable Berlese funnels or Winkler traps. Note that for all oonopids, it is best to collect any spiders that are under 3 mm in total length, and have six or fewer eyes. Do not attempt to discriminate adults from juveniles in the field; best to collect all the small spiders with six or fewer eyes. These will include some ochyroceratids, tetrablemmids, and caponiids, but all those groups are of interest.





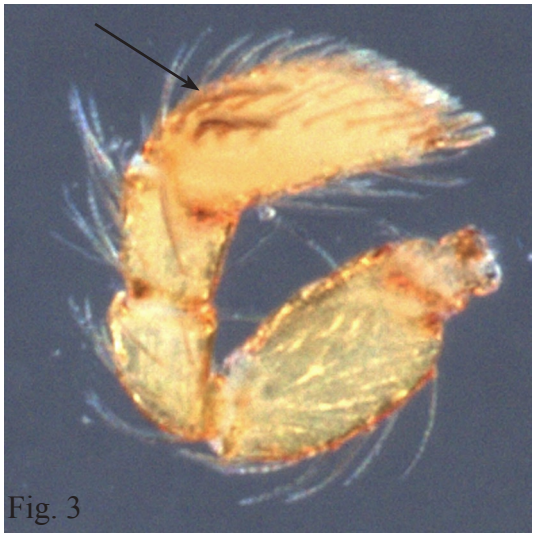


Fig. 1. Male carapace frontal view, anterior surface of chelicerae with conspicuous, black macrosetae.
Fig. 2. Male palp dorsal view, with conspicuous, black macrosetae on the prolateral side.
Fig. 3. Female palp prolateral view, with conspicuous, black macrosetae.

Fig. 4-6. *Scaphiella cymbalaria*, male habitus. 4. Dorsal view, showing complete dorsal scutum. 6. Lateral view, showing ventral and dorsal scuta. Fig. 5-7. *Scaphiella cymbalaria,* female habitus. 5. Dorsal view showing absence of dorsal scutum. 7. Lateral view, showing ventral taco-shaped scutum.