



## FIRST RECORD AND RANGE EXTENSION OF *BURMATTUS POCOCCI* THORELL (ARACHNIDA: ARANEAE: SALTICIDAE)

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### ABSTRACT

The first record of the jumping spider *Burmattus pococki* Thorell from Assam, Northeast India is reported. During regular field surveys inside Moran College campus from March-May 2022, one male individual of *B. pococki* was found resting underneath the leaves of *Ageratum conyzoides*. The earlier Indian records of *B. pococki* are from Karnataka, Maharashtra and Manipur. This study updates distribution of *B. pococki* in India, showing a range extension of about 452 km from the last nearest location.

**Key words:** *Burmattus pococki*, Eastern Himalaya, eight-legged, jumping spider, natural history, distribution, range extension

Jumping spiders are part of the family Salticidae Blackwall, 1841 (Arachnida: Araneae), which is the largest family in the order Araneae, with 659 genera and 6,310 species worldwide (WSC, 2020). India's salticid fauna consists of 343 species divided into 114 genera and 17 tribes (Singh et al., 2020a, b, c, d). However, only 268 species under 95 genera were recorded from India by Caleb and Sankaran (2020). The unique shape of the cephalothorax and eight-eye pattern of these jumping spiders help to identify them. They have four eyes, two of which are prominently large and designed for great spatial resolution (Forster, 1982). The genus *Burmattus* was erected by Proszynski in 1992 to accommodate two species originally described by Thorell in 1895. The genus consists of five species worldwide viz. *Burmattus albopunctatus* (Myanmar), *Burmattus nitidus* (China), *Burmattus pachytibialis* (Indonesia), *Burmattus pococki* (India, Myanmar, Thailand, Vietnam, China, Japan) and *Burmattus sinicus* (China). In India, *Burmattus pococki* was previously reported from Karnataka (Abhijith, 2019), Maharashtra (Rithe, 2012) and Manipur (Kananbala et al., 2018). This paper reports occurrence of *Burmattus pococki* Thorell, 1895 from Assam for the first time, along with its redescription.

### MATERIALS AND METHODS

The authors conducted preliminary surveys inside Moran College campus located in Charaideo District, Assam to study the diversity of spiders and other insects. During regular field surveys from March-May, 2022

inside the college campus (27°10'34''N, 94°54'56''E, 113 msl), the authors observed one male individual of *Burmattus pococki* underneath the leaves of *Ageratum conyzoides*. The spider was collected in a 10ml plastic box and bring to the departmental laboratory for photo documentation. The photographs were captured using Nikon D500 camera with Nikon AF-S VR 105mm f/2.8G IF-ED lens. After capturing photographs of the spider from all possible angles, it was released immediately without causing any harm. The species identity was determined by comparing the detailed photographs with descriptions furnished by Thorell, 1895 and Prószyński, 1992. The lay out of the images were prepared using Adobe Photoshop CS software.

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### *A. Burmattus pococki* (Thorell, 1895)

**Synonym:** *Plexipus pocockii* Thorell, 1895

**Redescription:** Cephalothorax brownish black with patches of whitish setae. Ocular region deep brown, chelicerae black with patches of white setae towards the ocular region, fang reddish brown, maxilla dark brown with white apex, labium dark brown with white apex, pedipalp black with white setae, sternum yellowish brown. Abdomen darker greyish brown with 4 contrasting white dots. Leg I black and white, and light brown in tarsus region, while legs II, III and IV with light brown in metatarsus and tarsus region. Eyes 8 arranged in three rows (typical of Salticidae), clypeus with white setae. A small area of white hairs in between

PME and PLE. Throax is provided with lateral bands of white hairs on each side. Abdomen anteriorly with a longitudinal white band and a vertical median brown band encircled by white setae extending up to the middle region. A total of 4 contrasting white dots arranged in two rows on a dark black band – above large, below small. Spinneret covered with white setae (Fig. 1).

**Remarks:** The study of spiders in Assam is still insubstantial with few notable exceptions (Chetia & Kalita, 2012; Das et al, 2015; Gupta et al., 2015; Singh, 2016; Basumatary & Brahma, 2017; Pandit, 2019) and only 44 species of jumping spiders are recorded so far from the state (Singh et al., 2020). Undoubtedly, the

state holds more species than these records attributed to the diverse microhabitats with structurally more complex herbs and shrubs. The occurrence of the species in microhabitat of a college campus is a clear indication of lack of research on Araneae particularly Salticidae in the state (Fig. 3). The present record of *Burmattus pococki* not only updated the existing checklist of Salticidae of Assam but also revised the distribution of the species in India.

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Fig. 1. A - F: *Burmattus pococki* Male: A. Dorsal view; B. Lateral view; C. Frontal view; D. Close view of Cephalothorax; E. Close view of abdomen; F. Close view of ocular area

## AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION STATEMENT

S Das, D Boruah and A Bora conducted the sampling, collected, took the photographs and identified the species. S Das, D Boruah, S Bhowmik and A Bora prepared the manuscript. All authors read and approved the manuscript.

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