

# SPIDERS OF NEW CALEDONIA

In 2018, the *World Spider Catalogue* listed more than 47,000 species of spiders distributed within more than 4,000 genera worldwide. Some scientific studies suggest that at least twice as many species need to be discovered.

New Caledonia, classified as one of the world's biodiversity hotspots because of the incredible richness of its fauna and flora, both heavily threatened by human impacts, is not to be outdone. More than 320 species of spiders have been recorded there since the 19th century, and extrapolations from other places suggest that there are probably more to be discovered.

Much of these species is endemic to New Caledonia but the development of international trade has led to the arrival on the archipelago of adapted exotic (aliens) species to live with Man like *Smeringopus pallidus* (the ceiling spider, also called «Daddy long legs») which is an anthropophilic species. There is also so-called ubiquitous species that can be found everywhere in the intertropical zone or even globally.

The giant golden orb spider *Nephila sp.* weaves very resistant gigantic webs, while others are microscopic or even mimetic in order to blend into the background scenery like the Hersiliidae. Some have developed incredible hunting techniques: like a retiarius, *Menneus neocaledonicus*, called a gladiator spider, throws a silk net on its preys, the wolf spider (of the Lycosidae family) ambushes on the ground and the ant spider (*Anatea formicaria*) mimics its prey to better approach it.

From far being exhaustive, this poster presents a selection of 30 portraits, representative of the extreme diversity of forms and lifestyles, including some emblematic species such as a tarantula, a black widow or a spiny orb weaver, and others that are much less known but are of equal interest to nature enthusiasts.

Mean body size (cephalothorax and abdomen) in mm

Endemic species

