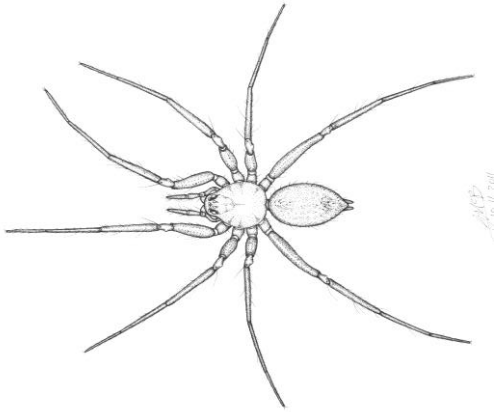


Horrid ground-weaver spider (*Nothopantes horridus*)

DESCRIPTION



© Fergus McBurney

This spider is so rare it is only found in two places in the world, both old limestone quarries in the Plymouth area.

The Horrid ground-weaver is a money spider just 2.5mm long. But despite, or perhaps because of, its small size and strange name it has become a talisman for the conservation of endangered species.

A third of the global distribution of the spider has been built on in the last 30 years and in 2015 another third was threatened with a housing estate, Plymouth Council and Buglife opposed the development. 10,000 people signed a petition to save the species “it may not be a tiger, but it is just as important” was a common sentiment.

Newspaper articles and Radio 4 debates ensued in which the Horrid ground weaver became a cause célèbre for endangered wildlife.

CONSERVATION ACTION

The plight of the Horrid ground weaver highlights several topical and important conservation challenges:-

1. Ensuring sufficient space is left for endangered species to survive.
2. Ensuring that the planning system can adequately protect our environmental heritage.
3. Ensuring Britain contributes to achieving the global target of halting biodiversity loss.
4. Ensuring that society values the small and apparently insignificant.

These issues have a local dimension in the Plymouth area, but when moral leaders are highlighting our duty to life on Earth, also apply across society.

“In assessing the environmental impact of any project....few careful studies are made of its impact on biodiversity, as if the loss of specieswere of little importance”. *Pope Francis, 24 May 2015.*



© Rupert Goddard

A partnership for species conservation. Ambitious. Expert. Committed.