

Oonopidae: *Dysderina* complex

by Norm Platnick & Nadine Dupérré

The *Dysderina* complex is one of the largest clades of Neotropical oonopids, containing more than 225 species in at least nine genera. Found from Mexico to Argentina, the group is represented in the Caribbean by at least three genera. The primary target group is a relatively small genus, *Simonoonops*, which will be revised soon. Although only one species is currently placed in the genus, there are seven available specific names, including taxa from Venezuela, Guyana, and several islands in the Lesser Antilles (Trinidad, St. Vincent, Dominica, Grenada). Four of those species have been described from St. Vincent, and that island should be a high priority for sampling, especially since so many generic names by Simon are based on species from there.

Adults of the Caribbean species in this complex are very hard-bodied, reddish animals, with substantial scuta on both the dorsal and ventral sides of the abdomen, and are characterized by having several pairs of very long spines underneath the anterior tibiae and metatarsi. Specimens of *Simonoonops* resemble those of *Dysderina* in having three transverse ridges on the sternum. Members of another genus that is common in northern South America have been taken in at least Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands; they lack the transverse ridges on the sternum, but have deep grooves on the sides of the sternum.

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 that 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.

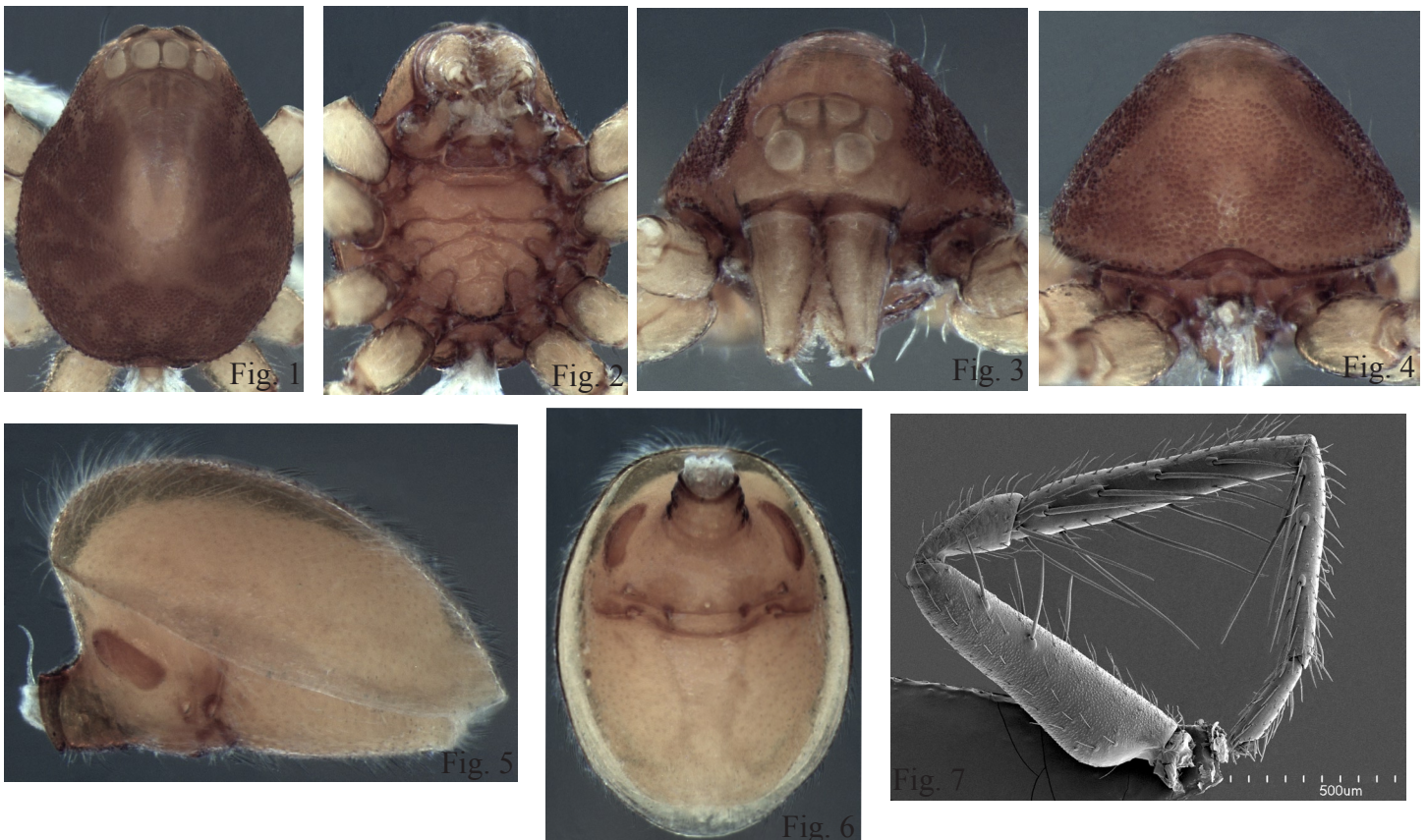


Fig. 1-7. Male *Dysderina principalis*. 1. Carapace, dorsal view. 2. Sternum, ventral view. 3. Carapace, anterior view. 4. Carapace, posterior view. 5. Abdomen, lateral view. 6. Abdomen, ventral view. 7. Leg I, lateral view.