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Research article

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On three species of *Plexippoides* Prószyński, 1984 from Southwest, China (Araneae: Salticidae)

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Abstract. A new species of *Plexippoides* Prószyński, 1984 is described from Southwest China: *P. qiui* sp. nov. (♂♀). *Plexippoides cornutus* Xie & Peng, 1993 and *P. meniscatus* Yang, Zhu & Song, 2006 are re-described. The unknown female of *P. cornutus* Xie & Peng, 1993 is described for the first time. Diagnostic photos and a distributional map for the studied specimens of these species are provided.

Keywords. Jumping spider, morphology, new species, Plexippina, taxonomy.

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Introduction

Plexippoides Prószyński, 1984 is placed in the subtribe Plexippina Simon, 1901, together with 34 other genera (Maddison 2015; Metzner 2024), and is represented by 24 nominal species distributed in the territory stretching from the eastern Mediterranean to East Asia (Logunov 2021; WSC 2024). The genus is rich in East Asian species, especially from China, where 17 are recorded and 14 are endemic (Metzner 2024; WSC 2024). Although all its species have the diagnostic features represented by drawings, 35% of the members are only known from a single sex. It has yet to be large-scale revised and might turn out to be polyphyletic (see discussion), indicating the need for further taxonomic attention (WSC 2024).

In our recent examination of jumping spiders, a species of *Plexippoides* collected from Yunnan, China, was recognized as new to science, and the unknown females of *P. cornutus* Xie & Peng, 1993 were also found. The present work aims to (re-)describe those two species and the poorly drawn species, *P. meniscatus* Yang, Zhu & Song, 2006.

Material and methods

All specimens were collected by beating shrubs or hand collecting and preserved in 80%–95% alcohol. Specimens are deposited in the Museum of Tongren University (TRU) in Tongren, China. Specimens were examined with an Olympus SZX10 stereo microscope. After dissection, the vulvae were cleared in a trypsin enzyme solution before examination and imaging. Images of the copulatory organs and habitus were taken with a Kuy Nice CCD mounted on an Olympus BX43 compound microscope. Compound focus images were generated using Helicon Focus ver. 6.7.1. Drawings of the paths of the copulatory ducts were generated by Adobe Illustrator CC 2018. ArcGIS ver. 10.4 software was used to create the distribution map. All measurements are given in millimetres. Leg measurements are given as total length (femur, patella, tibia, metatarsus, tarsus).

Abbreviations used in the text and figures

AERW = anterior eye row width
AG = accessory gland
ALE = anterior lateral eye
AME = anterior median eye
AR = atrial ridge
At = atrium
CD = copulatory duct
CO = copulatory opening
E = embolus
EFL = eye field length
FD = fertilization duct
PERW = posterior eye row width
PLE = posterior lateral eye
RCA = retrolateral cymbial apophysis
RTA = retrolateral tibial apophysis
S = spermatheca
SD = sperm duct
TF = tegular flap

Results

Taxonomy

Class Arachnida Cuvier, 1812
Order Araneae Clerck, 1757
Family Salticidae Blackwall, 1841
Genus *Plexippoides* Prószyński, 1984

Plexippoides cornutus Xie & Peng, 1993
Figs 1–2, 7

Plexippoides cornutus Xie & Peng, 1993: 19, figs 1–4 (male holotype, not examined).

Plexippoides cornutus – Peng *et al.* 1993: 172, figs 602–605. — Song *et al.* 1999: 540, figs 309n–o, 328l. — Peng 2020: 319, fig. 228a–d.

Diagnosis

Plexippoides cornutus Xie & Peng, 1993 closely resembles *P. subvalidus* Zhou, Li, Wang & Liu, 2023 in having a very similar habitus and copulatory organs, but it differs in: 1) the RTA is acutely narrowed medially to a pointed tip directed in a position about 1:30 o'clock in retrolateral view (Fig. 1C) vs tapered into a rather blunt tip directed in a position about 3 o'clock in *P. subvalidus* (Zhou *et al.* 2023: fig. 2c); 2) the copulatory duct is coiled about one loop medially (Fig. 2B–D, J) vs about two or three continuous loops in *P. subvalidus* (Zhou *et al.* 2023: fig. 2f).

Material examined

CHINA • 5 ♂♂, 3 ♀♀; Guizhou, Xingren County, Luchuying Township, Qingshuihe Nature Reserve, Mabaoshu Grand Canyon; 25°17.79' N, 104°56.13' E; 1270 m a.s.l.; 3 Aug. 2016; C. Wang *et al.* leg.; TRU-JS 0708–0715.

Description

Male (TRU-JS 0708)

MEASUREMENTS. Total length 5.69. Carapace 2.66 long, 2.07 wide. Abdomen 2.93 long, 1.66 wide. Eye sizes and inter-distances: AME 0.59, ALE 0.32, PLE 0.30, AERW 1.83, PERW 1.76, EFL 1.24. Legs: I 6.05 (1.75, 1.00, 1.50, 1.05, 0.75), II 5.50 (1.65, 0.95, 1.25, 1.00, 0.65), III 6.35 (1.90, 1.00, 1.35, 1.35, 0.75), IV 6.45 (1.90, 0.90, 1.40, 1.50, 0.75).

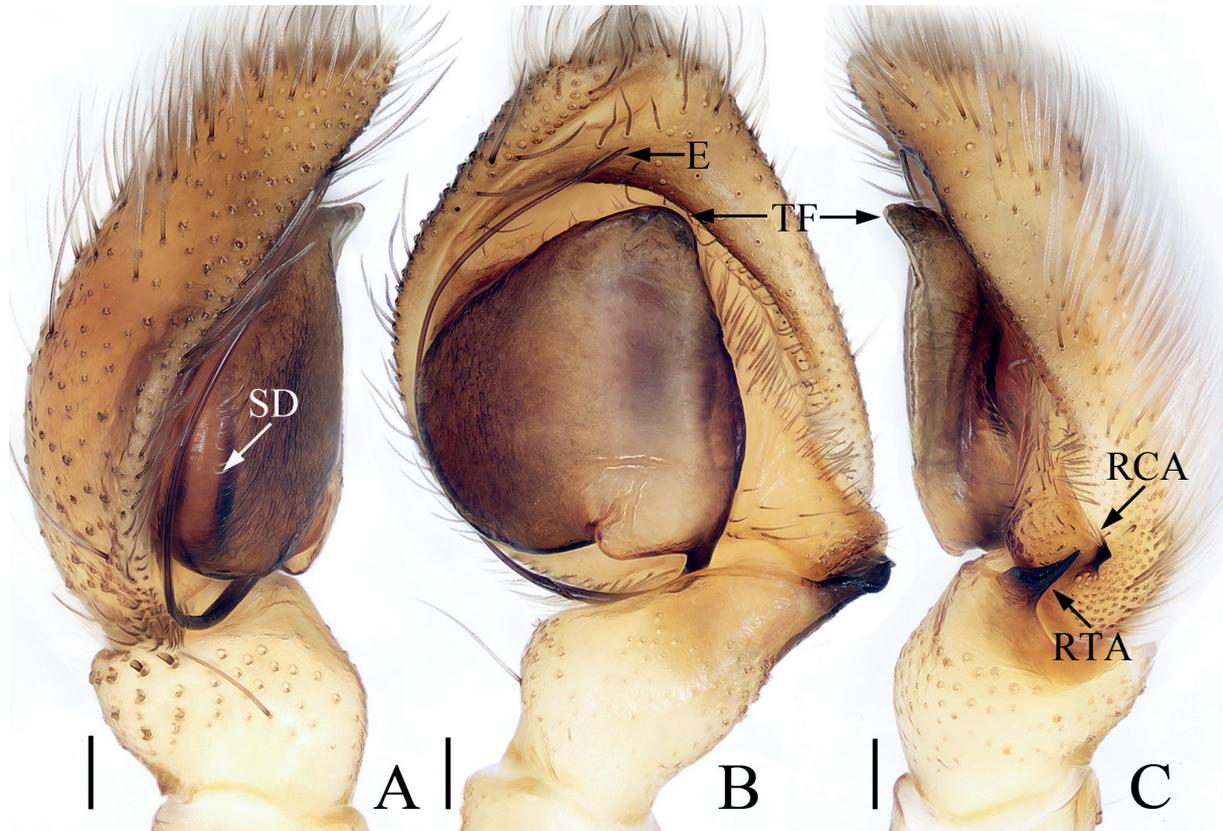


Fig. 1. Male palp of *Plexippoides cornutus* Xie & Peng, 1993 (TRU-JS 0708). **A.** Prolateral view. **B.** Ventral view. **C.** Retrolateral view. Abbreviations: see Material and methods. Scale bars = 0.1 mm.

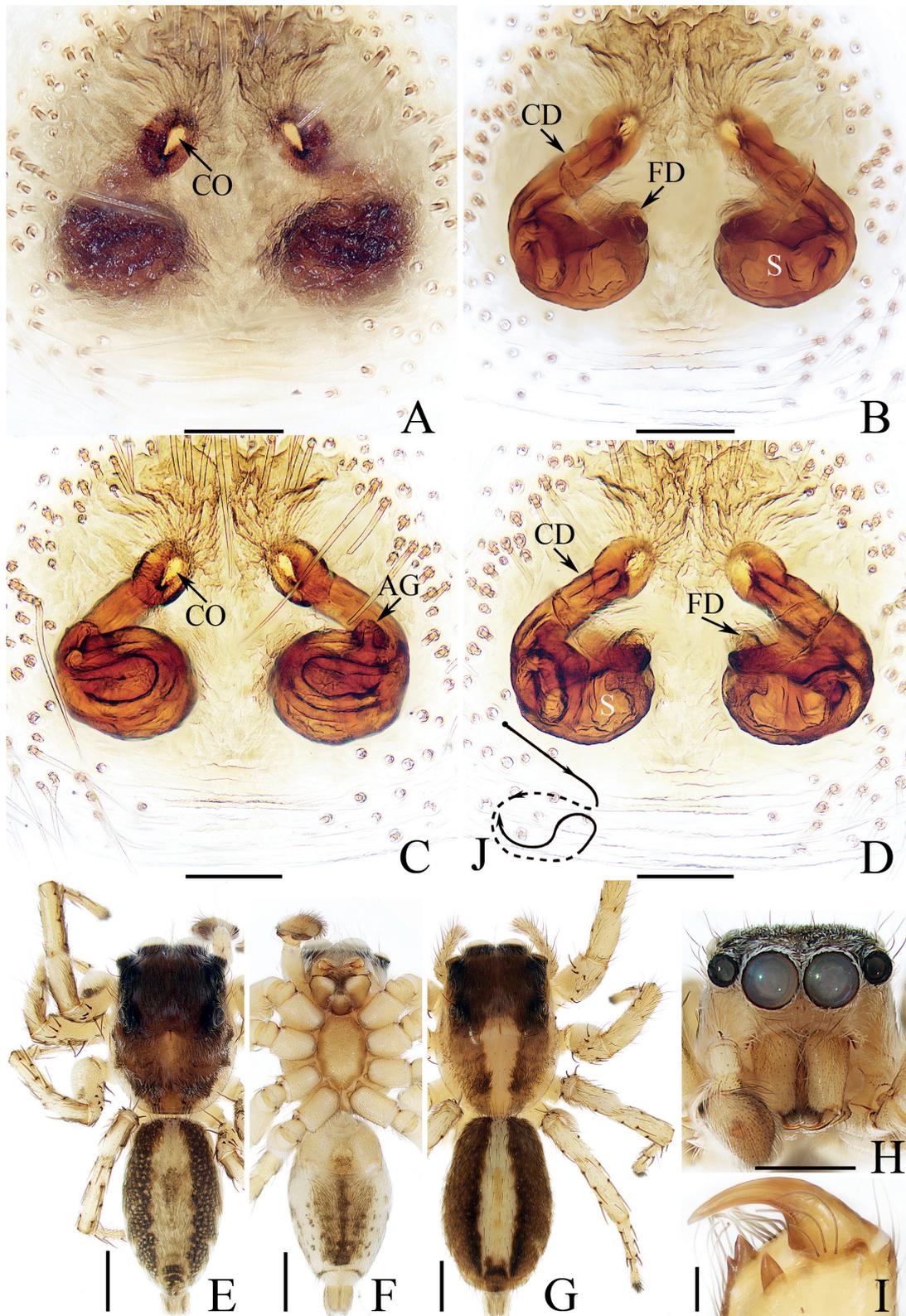


Fig. 2. *Plexippoides cornutus* Xie & Peng, 1993. A–D, G, J. ♀ (TRU-JS 0713). E–F, H–I. ♂ (TRU-JS 0708). A, C. Epigyne, ventral view. B, D. Vulva, dorsal view. E–G. Habitus. E, G. Dorsal view. F. Ventral view. H. Carapace, frontal view. I. Chelicera, posterior view. J. Path of copulatory duct, dorsal view. Abbreviations: see Material and methods. Scale bars: A–D, I = 0.1 mm; E–H = 1.0 mm.

HABITUS. Carapace red-brown, setose, with yellow marginal setal bands and paler area on thorax centrally; fovea longitudinal, red (Fig. 2E, H). Chelicerae yellow, with two promarginal teeth and one retromarginal tooth (Fig. 2H–I). Endites coloured as chelicerae, with small, hook-shaped, distal apophyses (Fig. 2F). Labium about linguiform (Fig. 2F). Sternum shield-shaped, about 1.5 × as long as wide (Fig. 2F). Legs pale yellow, spiny (Fig. 2E). Abdomen elongated, dorsum dark brown and spotted laterally, with two pairs of anteromedian muscle depressions and central, longitudinal, pale yellow band extending across whole surface; venter pale, with large, brown central band (Fig. 2E–F).

PALP. Tibia thick, with strongly sclerotized, twisted RTA acutely narrowed medially to pointed tip; cymbium setose, with lamellar, sub-triangular baso-retrolateral apophysis; bulb flat, almost round, with blunt, anterior flap, and sub-triangular posterior process near embolic base; embolus originates in position about 5:30 o'clock from bulb, coiled about a half circle, and with rather pointed end (Fig. 1A–C).

Female (TRU-JS 0713)

MEASUREMENTS. Total length 6.79. Carapace 3.25 long, 2.50 wide. Abdomen 3.54 long, 2.25 wide. Eye sizes and inter-distances: AME 0.63, ALE 0.38, PLE 0.33, AERW 2.04, PERW 2.00, EFL 1.33. Legs: I 5.70 (1.80, 1.00, 1.30, 0.95, 0.65), II 5.45 (1.75, 1.00, 1.25, 0.85, 0.60), III 6.50 (2.00, 1.15, 1.25, 1.40, 0.70), IV 6.75 (2.10, 1.05, 1.35, 1.50, 0.75).

HABITUS. Similar to that of male, except with longitudinal, central, yellow band extending across thorax (Fig. 2G).

EPIGYNE AND VULVA. Almost as long as wide; copulatory openings located anteriorly, elliptical, separated from each other more than their length; copulatory ducts coiled, forming complicated paths and with small, medially located, sub-triangular accessory glands; spermathecae elongate-oval, separated from each other slightly less than distance between copulatory openings; fertilization ducts lamellar, anterolaterally extending (Fig. 2A–D, J).

Distribution

China (Guizhou) (Fig. 7).

Plexippoides meniscatus Yang, Zhu & Song, 2006
Figs 3–4, 7

Plexippoides meniscatus Yang, Zhu & Song, 2006: 13, fig. 1a–g (types not examined).

Plexippoides meniscatus – Peng 2020: 326, fig. 234a–d.

Diagnosis

The species resembles *P. potanini* Prószyński, 1984 in having similar copulatory organs, especially the origin and forms of the tegular flap and embolus, as well as the general shape of the epigyne and vulva, but it can be easily distinguished by the following: 1) the RTA has a pointed tip directed dorsally in retrolateral view (Fig. 3B) vs directed anterodorsally in *P. potanini* (Prószyński 1984: fig. 12); 2) the atrium has a pair of lateral ridges (Fig. 4A, C) vs no ridges in *P. potanini* (Peng 2020: fig. 235e).

Material examined

CHINA • 2 ♂♂, 2 ♀♀; Yunnan, Kunming City, Guandu District, Shajin Vilige; 25°5.09' N, 103°1.02' E; 2340 m a.s.l.; 20 Nov. 2023; H. Qiu leg.; TRU-JS 0722–0725 • 1 ♂, 2 ♀♀; Dali City, Dali Township, Daliyiji; 24°40.90' N, 100°10.68' E; 1970 m a.s.l.; 1 Mar. 2024; Z. Yang *et al.* leg.; TRU-JS 0726–0728.

Description

Male (TRU-JS 0722)

MEASUREMENTS. Total length 5.93. Carapace 3.16 long, 2.43 wide. Abdomen 2.80 long, 1.96 wide. Eye sizes and inter-distances: AME 0.60, ALE 0.36, PLE 0.30, AERW 1.88, PERW 1.85, EFL 1.15. Legs: I 6.10 (1.65, 1.25, 1.35, 1.15, 0.70), II 5.40 (1.75, 1.10, 1.40, 0.50, 0.65), III 6.55 (2.10, 1.05, 1.35, 1.35, 0.70), IV 6.76 (2.01, 0.95, 1.50, 1.60, 0.70).

HABITUS. Carapace dark, setose, with marginal white setal bands and paler area on centre of thorax; fovea dark red, longitudinal (Fig. 4E, H). Chelicerae pale, with two promarginal teeth and one retromarginal tooth (Fig. 4H–I). Endites flat and broad, with laterally extended, small, hook-shaped, distal apophyses (Fig. 4F). Labium coloured as chelicerae, almost linguiform (Fig. 4F). Sternum about shield-shaped (Fig. 4F). Legs pale, spiny (Fig. 4E–F). Abdomen elongate-oval, dorsum dark brown except white on lateral margins, with big, irregular, cental, pale brown patch; venter dark, with pair of dotted lines medially (Fig. 4E–F).

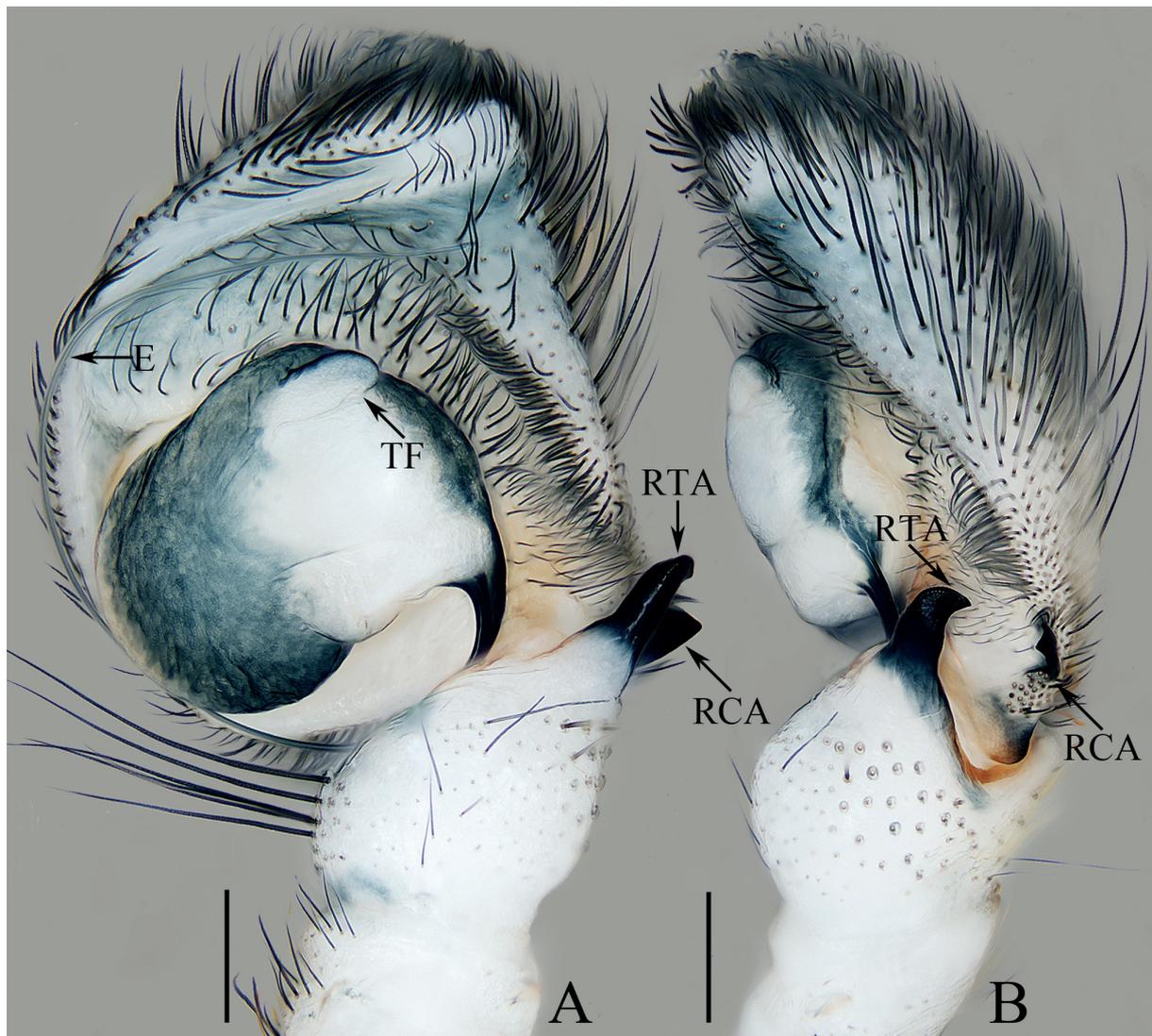


Fig. 3. Male palp of *Plexippoides meniscatus* Yang, Zhu & Song, 2006 (TRU-JS 0722). **A.** Ventral view. **B.** Retrolateral view. Abbreviations: see Material and methods. Scale bars = 0.2 mm.

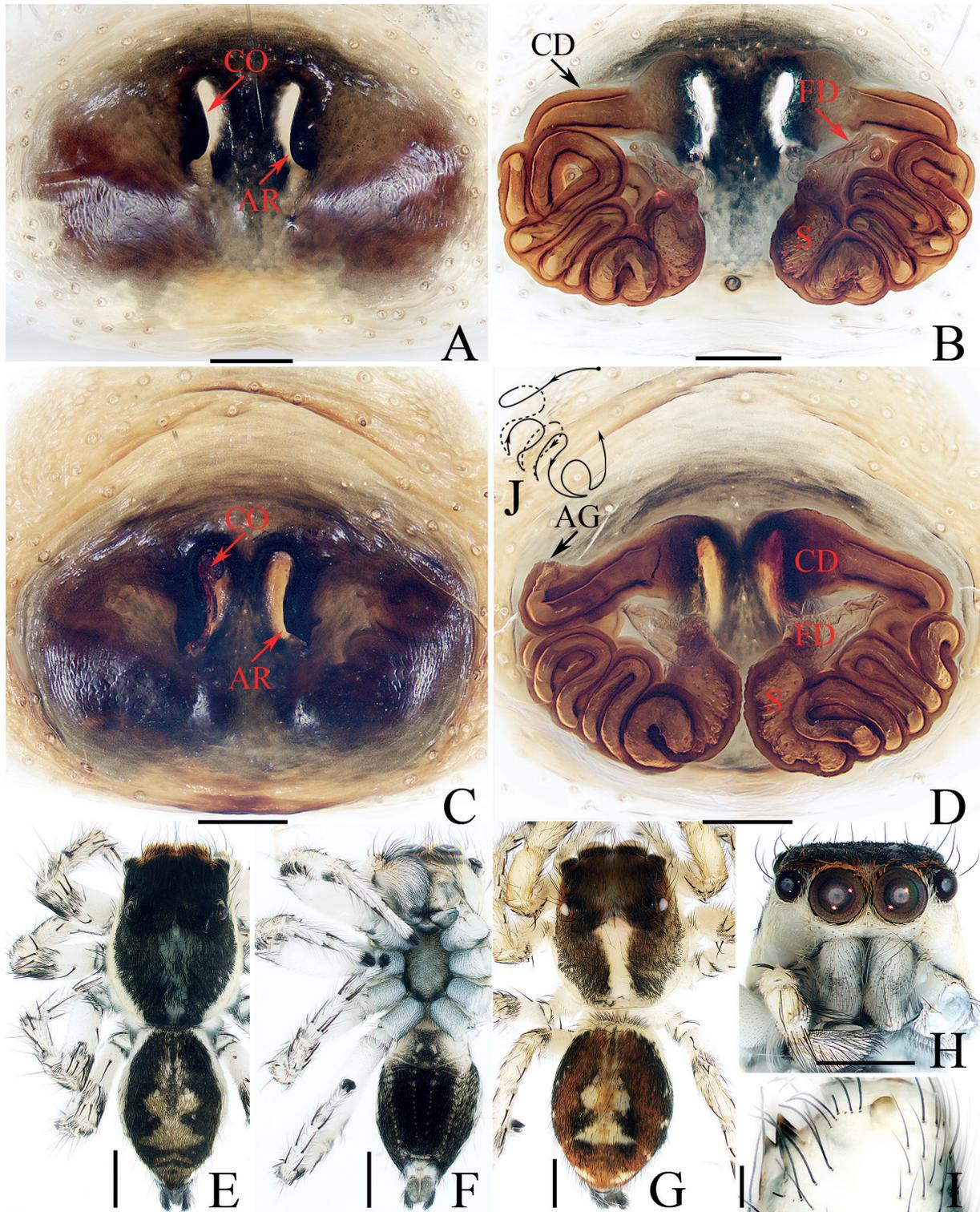


Fig. 4. *Plexippoides meniscatus* Yang, Zhu & Song, 2006. A–B, G. ♀ (TRU-JS 0724). C–D, J. ♀ (TRU-JS 0725). E–F, H–I. ♂ (TRU-JS 0722). A, C. Epigyne, ventral view. B, D. Vulva, dorsal view. E–G. Habitus. E, G. Dorsal view. F. Ventral view. H. Carapace, frontal view. I. Chelicera, posterior view. J. Path of copulatory duct, dorsal view. Abbreviations: see Material and methods. Scale bars: A–D, I = 0.1 mm; E–H = 1.0 mm.

PALP. Tibia swollen, with strongly sclerotized retrolateral apophysis curved distally and with pointed tip directed dorsally; cymbium setose, slightly longer than wide, with baso-retrolateral, triangular apophysis crossed with RTA in ventral view; bulb almost round, with anteriorly located, retrolaterally extending flap; embolus rises in position about 3 o'clock from bulb, coiled less than a circle (Fig. 3A–B).

Female (TRU-JS 0724, 0725)

MEASUREMENTS. Total length 7.11. Carapace 3.34 long, 2.81 wide. Abdomen 3.56 long, 2.59 wide. Eye sizes and inter-distances: AME 0.65, ALE 0.38, PLE 0.31, AERW 2.14, PERW 2.21, EFL 1.24. Legs: I 5.80 (1.65, 1.25, 1.40, 0.85, 0.65), II 5.55 (1.60, 1.15, 1.35, 0.80, 0.65), III 6.50 (2.20, 1.05, 1.25, 1.30, 0.70), IV 7.05 (2.20, 1.05, 1.50, 1.60, 0.70).

HABITUS. Similar to that of males except of mainly red-brown colour (Fig. 4G).

EPIGYNE AND VULVA. Wider than long; atrium almost square, with pair of lateral ridges; copulatory openings slit-shaped; copulatory ducts long, coiled, forming complicated patch, with proximal accessory glands; spermathecae elongate, close to each other; fertilization ducts lamellar, originating from anterior portions of spermathecae, almost transversely extending (Fig. 4A–D, J).

Distribution

China (Yunnan) (Fig. 7).

Plexippoides qiui sp. nov.

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Figs 5–7

Diagnosis

The male of *Plexippoides qiui* sp. nov. closely resembles that of *P. longapophysis* Wang, Mi & Peng, 2020 in having a very similar palp, especially the very long RCA and RTA, but it can be distinguished by the following: 1) the RTA is strongly curved into a U-shape at the base in ventral view, and straight distally in retrolateral view (Fig. 5B–C) vs just slightly curved at the base and curved towards cymbium distally in *P. longapophysis* (Wang *et al.* 2020: fig. 2b–c); 2) the embolus originates in a position about 3 o'clock from the bulb (Fig. 5A) vs ca 4:30 o'clock from the bulb in *P. longapophysis* (Wang *et al.* 2020: fig. 2b). The female closely resembles that of *P. subtristis* Wang, Mi & Peng, 2020 in having a very similar epigyne and vulva structure, but it can be distinguished by the elliptical atrium, and the arc-shaped posterior epigynal margin, as well as the medially located spermathecae (Fig. 6A–D) (vs oval atrium, the straight posterior epigynal margin, and posteriorly located spermathecae in *P. subtristis*; Wang *et al.* 2020: fig. 3d–e).

Etymology

The specific name is a noun and patronym in honour of the collector, Hang Qiu.

Type material

Holotype

CHINA • ♂; Yunnan, Kunming, Guandu District, Shajin Village; 25°5.09' N, 103°1.02' E; 2340 m a.s.l.; 20 Nov. 2023; H. Qiu leg.; TRU-JS 0716.

Paratypes

CHINA • 2 ♂♂, 3 ♀♀; same data as for holotype; TRU-JS 0717–0721.

Description

Male (holotype, TRU-JS 0716)

MEASUREMENTS. Total length 4.67. Carapace 2.33 long, 1.76 wide. Abdomen 2.35 long, 1.24 wide. Eye sizes and inter-distances: AME 0.48, ALE 0.25, PLE 0.23, AERW 1.54, PERW 1.54, EFL 1.02. Legs: I 4.26 (1.28, 0.75, 1.00, 0.73, 0.50), II 3.91 (1.25, 0.70, 0.83, 0.63, 0.50), III 4.78 (1.55, 0.70, 1.05, 0.98, 0.50), IV 4.99 (1.50, 0.70, 1.13, 1.13, 0.53).

HABITUS. Carapace mainly yellow-brown, covered with dense dark and golden setae, with sub-triangular, central, pale yellow band extending from middle of eye field to terminus; fovea shallow, yellow, longitudinal (Fig. 6E, H). Chelicerae yellow to dark brown, with two promarginal teeth and one retromarginal tooth (Fig. 6H–I). Endites pale, with small, hook-shaped, distal apophyses extended laterally (Fig. 6F). Labium darker than endites, bearing dark setae distally (Fig. 6F). Sternum pale, about $1.5 \times$ as long as wide (Fig. 6F). Legs pale except femora mainly dark, spiny (Fig. 6E). Abdomen elongated, dorsum dark brown, with two pairs of median muscle depressions, and central, broad, longitudinal pale band extending from anterior margin to posterior $\frac{4}{5}$, and separated by narrow dark stripe; venter coloured as dorsum (Fig. 6E–F).

PALP. Tibia swollen, with long, strongly sclerotized RTA curved into U-shape at base and blunt apically; cymbium flat, and setose, with strongly sclerotized baso-retrolateral apophysis slightly curved medially and pointed at end in ventral view; bulb flat, with anterior-marginal flap extending towards retrolateral side; embolus flagelliform, originates in position about 3 o'clock from bulb, coiled less than one circle, with needle-shaped distal portion that reaches cymbial tip (Fig. 5A–C).

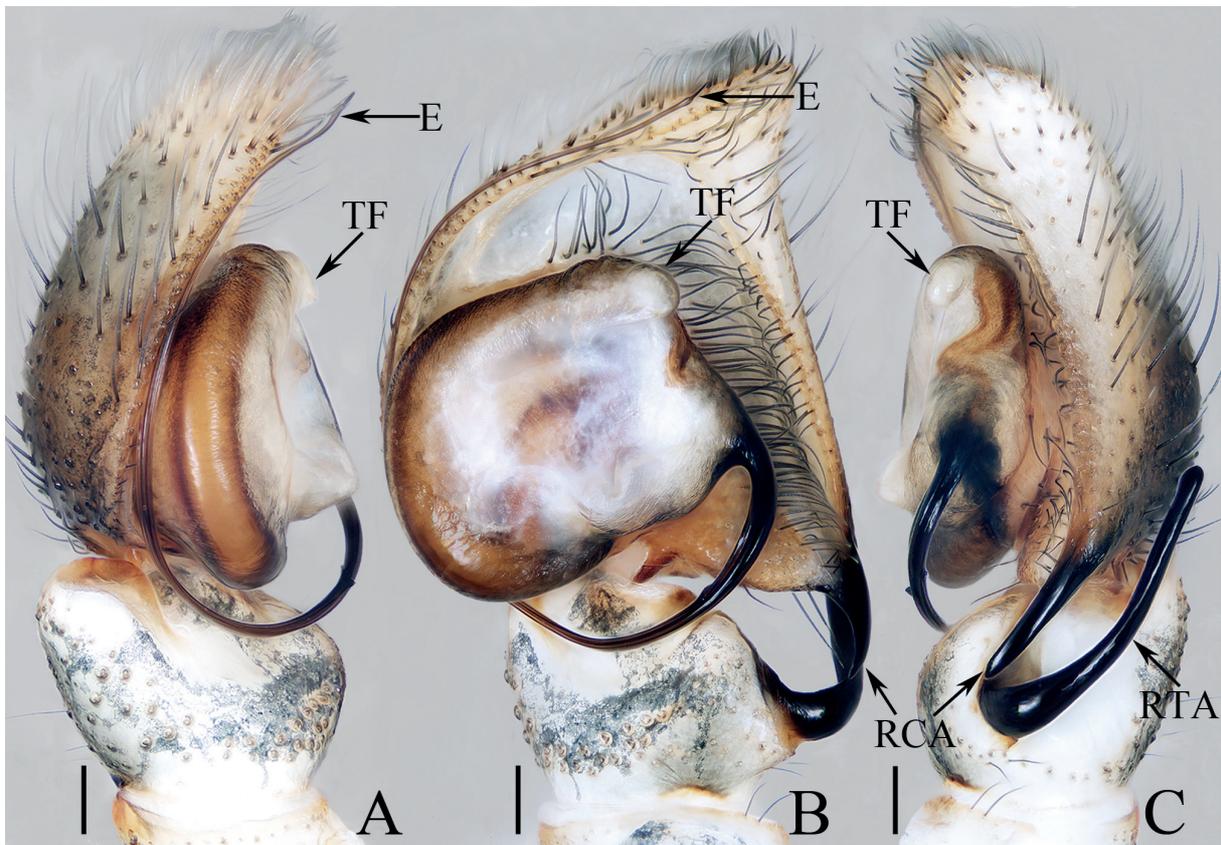


Fig. 5. Male palp of *Plexippoides qiui* sp. nov., holotype (TRU-JS 0716). **A.** Prolateral view. **B.** Ventral view. **C.** Retrolateral view. Abbreviations: see Material and methods. Scale bars = 0.1 mm.

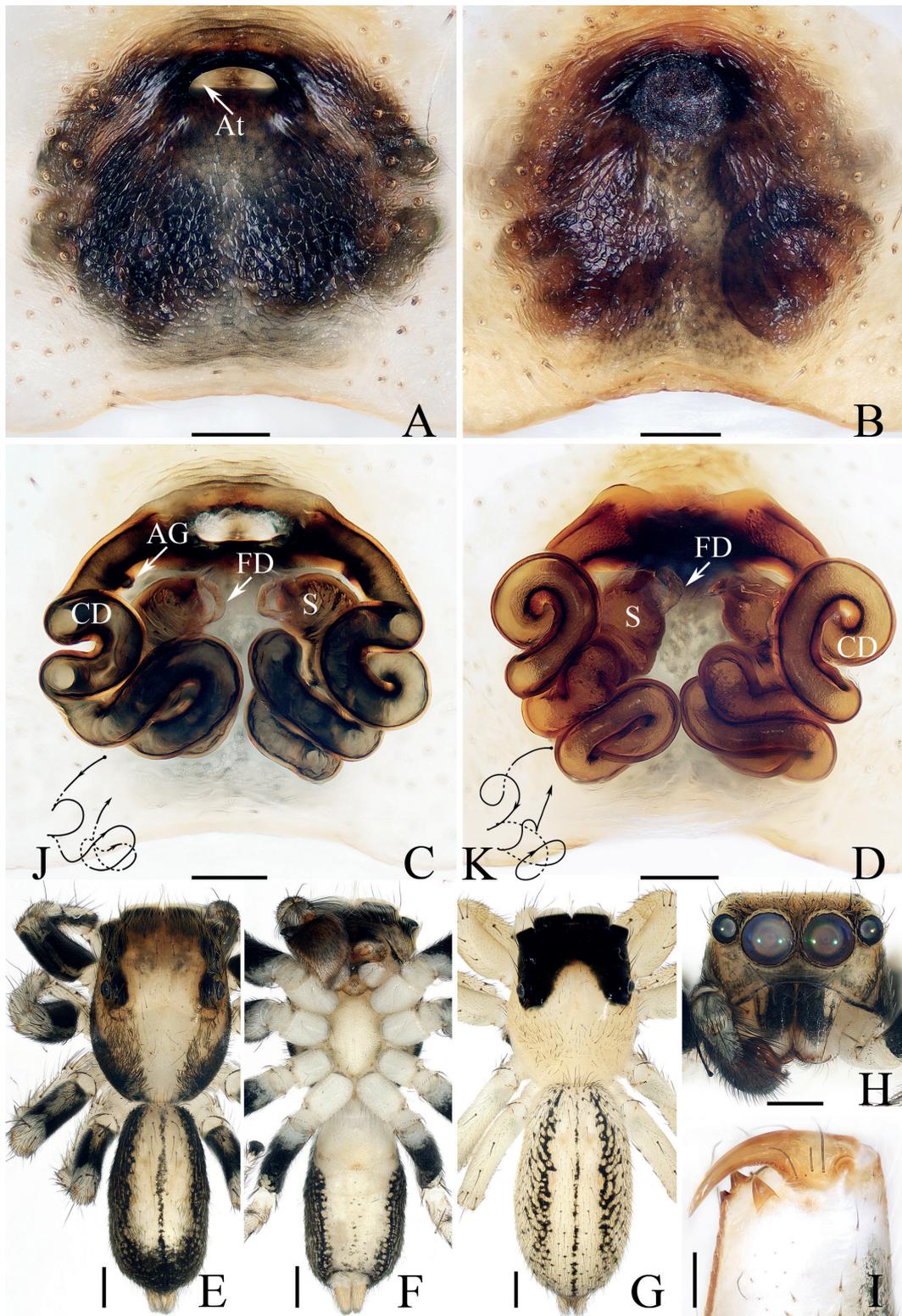


Fig. 6. *Plexippoides qiu* sp. nov., female paratypes and male holotype. **A, C, J.** Paratype, ♀ (TRU-JS 0720). **B, D, G, K.** Paratype, ♀ (TRU-JS 0719). **E–F, H–I.** Holotype, ♂ (TRU-JS 0716). **A–B.** Epigyne, ventral view. **C–D.** Vulva, dorsal view. **E–G.** Habitus. **E, G.** Dorsal view. **F.** Ventral view. **H.** Carapace, frontal view. **I.** Chelicera, posterior view. **J–K.** Path of copulatory duct, dorsal view. Abbreviations: see Material and methods. Scale bars: **A–D, I** = 0.1 mm; **E–H** = 0.5 mm.

Female (paratypes, TRU-JS 0719, 0720)

MEASUREMENTS. Total length 5.14. Carapace 2.33 long, 1.79 wide. Abdomen 2.98 long, 1.60 wide. Eye sizes and inter-distances: AME 0.50, ALE 0.26, PLE 0.24, AERW 1.55, PERW 1.62, EFL 1.02. Legs: I 4.29 (1.38, 0.88, 0.95, 0.63, 0.45), II 4.16 (1.25, 0.75, 0.88, 0.83, 0.45), III 4.65 (1.50, 0.75, 0.95, 0.95, 0.50), IV 5.06 (1.63, 0.75, 1.10, 1.08, 0.50).

HABITUS. Similar to that of male, except pale in colour and with dark area on cephalon (Fig. 6G).

EPIGYNE AND VULVA. Wider than long, with anteriorly located, elliptical atrium; copulatory openings beneath lateral margins of atrium; copulatory ducts long, forming complicated paths; spermathecae elongate-oval; fertilization ducts lamellar, originating from anterior portions of spermathecae (Fig. 6A–D, J–K).

Distribution

Known only from the type locality in Yunnan, China (Fig. 7).

Remark

The unpublished molecular evidence has supported the pairing.

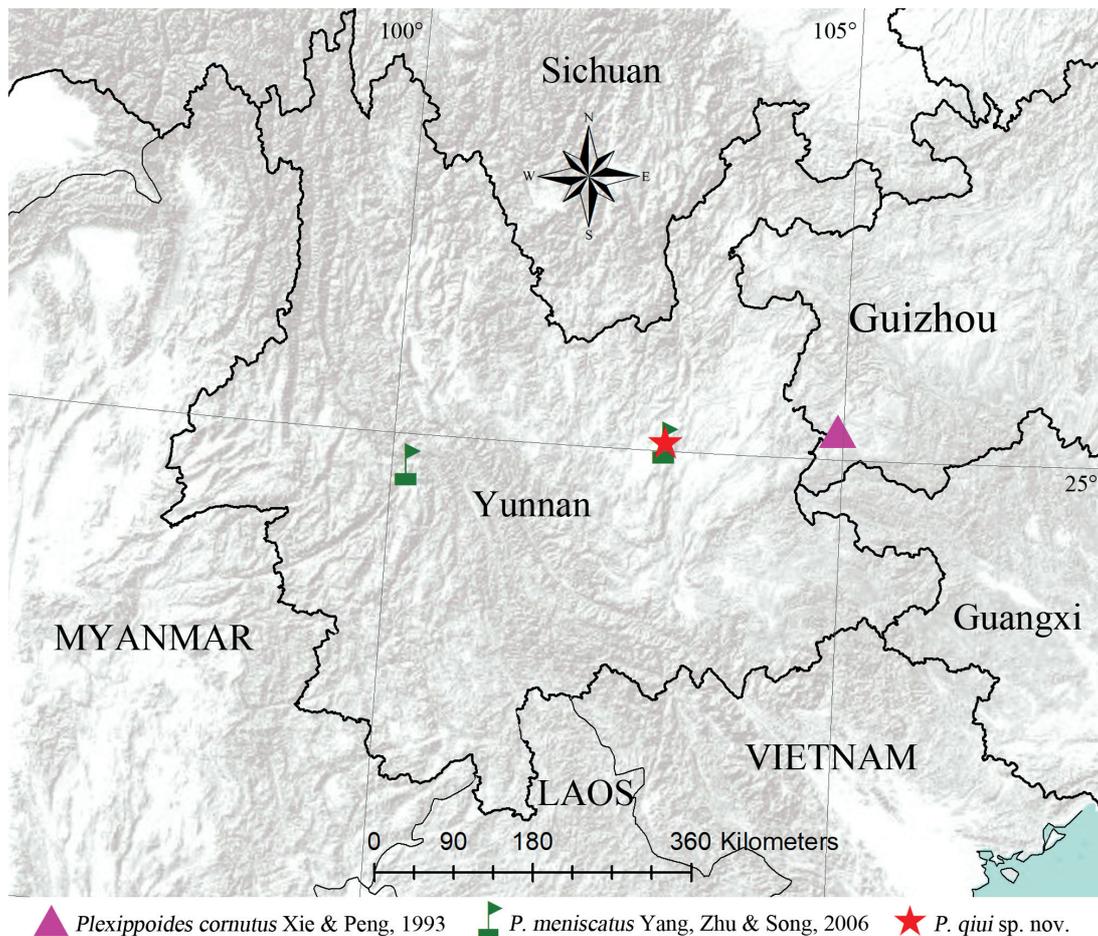


Fig 7. Distributional records of the species of *Plexippoides* Prószyński, 1984.

Discussion

Morphologically, most Asian species of *Plexippoides* (*P. annulipedis* (Saito, 1939), *P. cornutus*, *P. digitatus* Peng & Li, 2002, *P. discifer* (Schenkel, 1953), *P. doenitzi* (Karsch, 1879), *P. jinlini* Yang, Zhu & Song, 2006, *P. longapophysis* Lei & Peng, 2013, *P. longus* Zhu *et al.*, 2005, *P. meniscatus*, *P. nishitakensis* (Strand, 1907), *P. potanini*, *P. regius* Wesołowska, 1981, *P. regiusoides* Peng & Li, 2008, *P. subtristis*, *P. subvulidus*, *P. szechuanensis* Logunov, 1993, *P. tangi* Wang, Mi & Peng, 2020, and *P. validus*) and *P. tristis* (from South Asia) are relatively consistent in habitus and copulatory organs (see the drawings in Metzner 2024). They can be readily distinguished from the genotype and its congeners (*P. flavescens* (O. Pickard-Cambridge, 1872), *P. gestroi* (Dalmás, 1920), and *P. insperatus* Logunov, 2021) by the longitudinal, pale band on the dorsum of the abdomen (vs absent in genotype and its congeners; Logunov 2021: figs 1, 8–9, 14–15, 45, 50), the tegular flap not raised in ventral view (vs raised in genotype and its congeners; Logunov 2021: figs 17, 23, 28; Logunov & Zamanpoore, 2005: figs 26, 28–29), and the absence of an epigynal hood (vs having a pair of postero-lateral hoods in genotype and its congeners; Logunov 2021: figs 33, 37, 41). Moreover, the genotype and its congeners are distributed from the eastern Mediterranean to Central Asia, and they do not overlap with the mentioned Asian species and *P. tristis* geographically. So, the mentioned Asian species and *P. tristis* might not be true *Plexippoides*, but that needs further verification.

Of the mentioned Asian species above, 17 are recorded in China. However, a high species diversity does not mean the taxonomic study of Chinese species is well done. In contrast, it remains problematic. Several records of species are doubtful, such as the records of *P. discifer*, *P. potanini* in Peng *et al.* (1993) and Zhang *et al.* (2022), which are inconsistent with their types (see the drawings in Metzner 2024), indicating they could be misidentified. Potential synonyms, such as *P. digitatus* and *P. discifer*, are almost indistinguishable in palpal structure (compare Peng: 2020: fig. 229b with Schenkel 1953: fig. 41), indicating the former could be a synonym of the latter. Moreover, several species cannot be precisely identified by the poorly known types, such as *P. doenitzi* and *P. regius* (see the drawings in Metzner 2024). Based on the above, the genus, especially the Chinese species, needs more taxonomic attention.

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