New distribution records for African whip spiders (Arachnida: Amblypygi)

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During a biodiversity survey of Monts Doudou in southwestern Gabon in February and March 2000 (Fisher 2004), a female whip spider (Amblypygi), Phrynichus exophthalmus Whittick, 1940, carrying her offspring (Fig. 1) was collected. It is the first record of this species from Gabon. The species is widespread in central Africa and has been recorded from Cameroon (type locality), the Democratic Republic of Congo, Kenya, the Republic of Congo, Rwanda, and Tanzania (Weygoldt 1998; Harvey 2003). A juvenile male, deposited in the collection of the California Academy of Sciences (CASC), was collected from Angola (Caconda). This new record indicates that the distribution of this species extends farther south. However, a single record from South Africa, deposited in the collection of the South African Museum (SAMC) remains dubious (Weygoldt 1998).

The other species known from Gabon, Damon johnstonii, is a common central African species. It is known from Cameroon (type locality), the Democratic Republic of Congo, Equatorial Guinea (including Bioko Island), Gabon, southern Nigeria, and the Republic of Congo (Weygoldt 1999; Harvey 2003; Prendini et al. 2005). It is newly

Fig. 1. Phrynichus exophthalmus female carrying offspring, from the Réserve des Monts Doudou, Ogooué-Maritime Province, Gabon. (Photograph: S. van Noort.)