
Notes on *Phidippus octopunctatus* (Araneae: Salticidae: Dendryphantinae)

David E. Hill¹

¹ 213 Wild Horse Creek Drive, Simpsonville, SC 29680-6513, USA, *email* platycryptus@yahoo.com

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Phidippus octopunctatus (Peckham & Peckham 1883) is a large (~10-18 mm body length) jumping spider that is widely distributed in the prairies and desert grasslands of western North America, maturing in the summer (Edwards 2004). Edwards described the females as *distinctly light grey* in color, but also included a photograph of a tan or light-brown female that resembles those shown here. This species, along with its little-known sister species *P. georgii*, comprise a clade (the *octopunctatus* group) that represents one of two major divisions of the genus *Phidippus* C. L. Koch 1846; male and female *P. georgii* are also large and lack the iridescent chelicerae that are characteristic of other *Phidippus* species (Edwards 2004).

P. octopunctatus is mostly allopatric with respect to *P. georgii* (Figure 1). Edwards (2004) observed that some female *P. octopunctatus* far to the north of the range of *P. georgii* have an epigynum that appears to be identical to that of the latter species, and therefore suggested that "this group should be reexamined at a future date." The major distinction between males of the two species lies in their dorsal coloration, which is grey in *P. octopunctatus* while male *P. georgii* are brown, like the females, and have a bright white or yellow dorsal cymbium (Edwards 2004). Differences in the genitalia of the two typological species may not preclude interbreeding, however.

McCook (1883) may have described this spider as *Attus opifex*, but his type has been lost. McCook later (1890) figured the large nest of a female *A. opifex*. Gardner (1965) described male and female spiders from San Bernardino, California, that she (or W. J. Gertsch, according to Gardner) identified as *Phidippus opifex* (McCook 1883). In coloration these agreed with the *P. octopunctatus* described by Edwards, except for the brown color of her females. However, Gardner's figures of the genitalia of *P. opifex* do not match the figures published by Edwards.

The *P. octopunctatus* shown here are from the vicinity of San Diego, California (Figures 2-3), and Queretaro de Arteaga in north-central Mexico (Figures 4-5). Females that were found in both areas in association with the typical males were very large and light brown in color. A brief survey of photos posted online (BG 2015, Metzner 2015) indicates that the dorsal scale cover of the otherwise black male *P. octopunctatus* varies from white to light grey to dark grey, and female coloration varies from white to light grey to light brown. This species has also been found in association with the sagebrush steppe of the Great Basin (BG 2015).

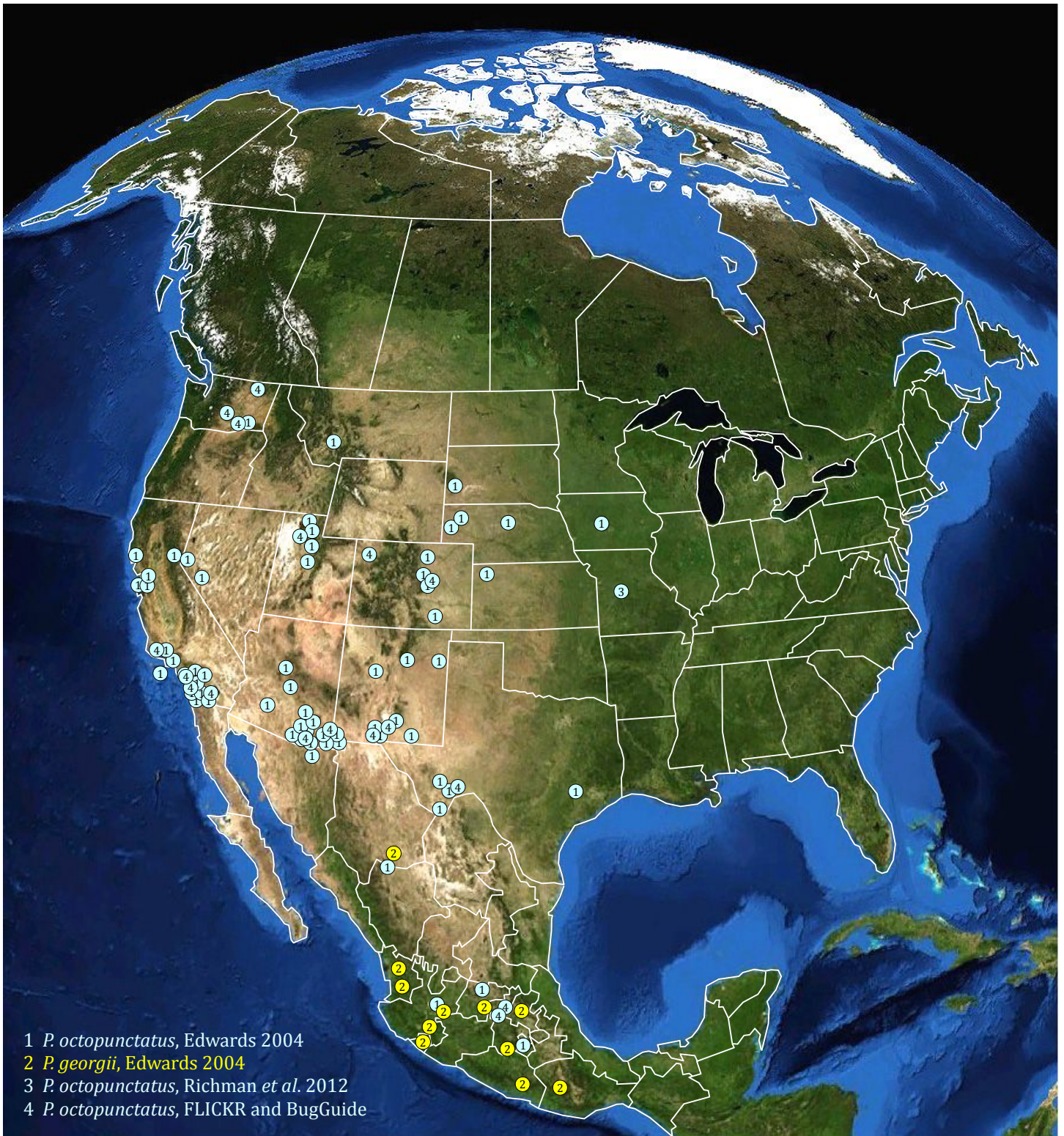


Figure 1. Localities associated with *Phidippus octopunctatus* and *P. georgii* in western North America, numbered to indicate source.



Figure 2. Female *Phidippus octopunctatus* from the vicinity of San Diego, California. Photographs by Mark A. Chappell, used with permission.

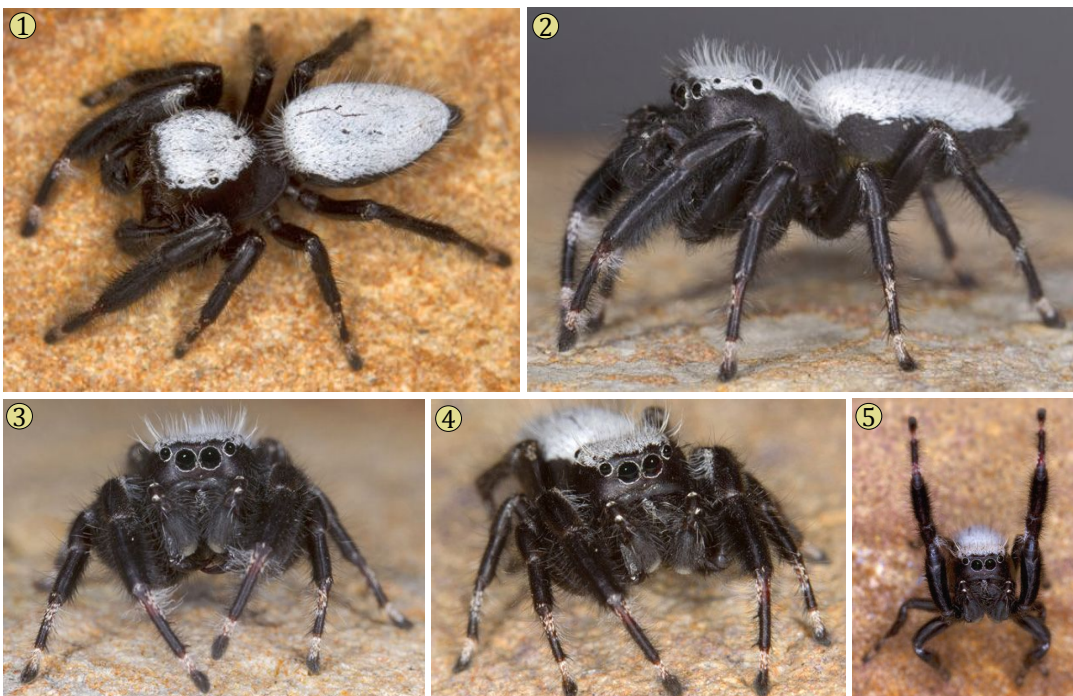


Figure 3. Male *Phidippus octopunctatus* from the vicinity of San Diego, California. Photographs by Mark A. Chappell, used with permission.



Figure 4. Male *Phidippus octopunctatus* from El Tejocote, Queretaro de Arteaga, Mexico (18 SEP 2010). Photographs by Carlos Mancilla, used with permission.



Figure 5. *Phidippus octopunctatus* from Queretaro de Arteaga, Mexico. **1**, Male on exposed rock, La Loma (2 SEP 2009). **2**, Female with large grasshopper on cactus, El Tejocote (20 SEP 2010). Photographs by Carlos Mancilla, used with permission.

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