

STUDY ON THE MORPHOLOGY, FEEDING CAPACITY AND PREY PREFERENCE OF ORB-WEAVING SPIDER *NEOSCONA NAUTICA* (L. KOCH, 1875).

Radheshyam Mishra, S.N. Chaubey and Ghufran Ahmad*

Department of Zoology, S.D.J.P.G. College Chandeshwar, Azamgarh -276 128, India.

*Department of Zoology, Shibli National (P.G.) College, Azamgarh -276 001, India.

e-mail: drsncchaubey@gmail.com, sdjpgc@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT : Laboratory studies were carried out to investigate morphology, prey preference and feeding capacity of *Neoscona nautica* (orb weaver spider) collected from various places of Azamgarh district in Uttar Pradesh (India). It was observed that it is a nocturnal species found on bushes near the crop fields, makes web at night and feeds on moths, mosquitoes, house flies and other soft bodied insects. A single individual can prey on about 19.40 ± 2.32 insects/ 24h. Moths were the preferred prey for this species. During morphological study two pairs of pit-like spots were observed on the dorsal surface of abdomen. This feature was reported here for the first time.

Key words: *Neoscona nautica*, morphology, feeding capacity, prey preference.