

Antelope Island Spider Festival

Jumping and Stalking Spiders

While spiders are commonly associated with the idea of building webs, there are many spiders that **don't build webs** but hunt or stalk their prey instead.

These spiders tend to have **excellent vision** to help them track possible prey items.

Some of the more well-known or frequently encountered families found in Utah that fall into these categories are Dysderidae (diz-DAIR-i-dee; Woodlouse Spiders), Lycosidae (ley-KO-si-dee; Wolf Spiders), and Salticidae (sal-TISS-id-dee; Jumping Spiders).

The Dysderidae family (Woodlouse spiders) get their common name from their preferred prey item, the **land crustacean** known as woodlice.



Locally these are frequently called roly-polies, sow or pill or potato bugs, even though they aren't bugs or insects at all, but are **actually isopods**.

Woodlouse spiders typically don't spin a web, but instead **hide under rocks**, or in holes in the ground to sleep during the day. **At night** they actively hunt their prey.

Woodlouse spiders have **six eyes**, usually have a milky reddish-orange body, and incredibly large fangs and chelicera, which they use to penetrate their prey's protective exoskeleton.

Despite their fearsome appearance, woodlouse spiders are **harmless to humans** and the typical effect of their bite is minor pain at the site of the bite that usually lasts for less than an hour.

Dysdera crocata (diz-DAIR-uh cro-KAY-tuh) was **introduced to the USA** and is not native here, it is also the only species in its family found in the USA.



The Lycosidae family (Wolf Spiders) get their common name from the way they hunt their prey. Instead of building webs or waiting in ambush, they **wander around at night** looking for prey. When they find it, they run it down similar to a wolf.

Wolf spiders primarily prey upon insects but will also eat other arachnids if the opportunity presents itself. Common prey items include beetles, moths, ants, roaches, and earwigs.

Wolf spiders are **easily identifiable** by their **distinct eye pattern**. They have 8 eyes of unequal size arranged into three rows.



With the exception of one genus, wolf spiders **do not spin webs**. Some will dig burrows in the ground or under rocks, while others have no set retreat.

Female wolf spiders can be seen **carrying their egg sacs** attached to their spinnerets. They will carry them around until they hatch, after which the **spiderlings will climb** onto momma's back and ride along until they are ready to disperse, usually after their first molt.

There are over 2,500 species of wolf spiders worldwide. About 240 of those, found in 21 different genera are located in the USA and Canada.

There are several species of wolf spiders that



can be found in Utah, including *Hogna carolinensis* (HAWG-nuh kair-oh-ly-NEN-sis). *H. carolinensis* is considered to be **the largest**

species of wolf spider found in **N. America**.

The Salticidae (Jumping Spiders) get their common name from their **unusual jumping behavior**. They utilize this behavior to both catch prey and as a form of locomotion.

Jumping spiders tend to be **diurnal** (di-ur-nal). This means they are most active during the day.

The jumping spiders compose the **largest family** of spiders, having >5,000 species described worldwide. More than 300 species in 63 genera are found in the USA and Canada.

Jumping spiders have **two large eyes** located in the center of their squarish cephalothorax, short stocky legs, and are often quite colorful.

Jumping spiders large eyes help actually give them **excellent vision**. They can **see in color**, to a high degree of resolution **including the ultra violet spectrum**. They may even be able to see with telephoto vision as well. However, red lights tend to throw off their depth perception.

Jumping spiders specialize in catching flying insects. Some of their common prey items include house flies, fruit flies, moths, butterflies, bees, and grasshoppers.

Phidippus audax (fid-DIP-uhs AW-dax) commonly called The Bold Jumper, is one of the most commonly encountered jumping spiders in Utah.



Neither the wolf spiders nor the jumping spiders have medically significant venom, and are considered harmless to humans. In fact both are considered to be **extremely beneficial to humans** as a form of natural pest control.

Sources:

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Red eyes not visible from front in Maevia