

EXTRA-ALPINE ARACHNID SPECIES IN CENTRAL EUROPE WITH RESTRICTED
DISTRIBUTION AREAS

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No habitat type or biogeographical unit (on the level of the European Union) is restricted to a single European country. Only small northern parts of the Alps belong to Germany. The Atlantic and the Continental lowlands exist as a similar specification in the adjacent countries of Germany, as well as the lower mountain ranges from 300 to 1000 m a.s.l. Therefore, as arthropods cannot be restricted by political borders, we do not count truly endemic arachnid species in our country. This is also the case for most other groups of animals.

The German Federal Agency of Nature Protection (Bundesamt für Naturschutz) developed a method and categorisation for the species to evaluate the responsibility of a country for each individual species. This is an additional category in the Red Data Lists, but does not mean automatically that a species – for which a given country is especially responsible – must automatically be endangered in that same country.

For the arachnids the important parts of these criteria are:

1. Germany is to an especially high degree responsible for a species: (a) at least 3/4 of the area or of the known population or records of a species is situated in Germany; (b) between 1/3 and 3/4 of the area or of the known population or records of a species is situated in Germany, and Germany is in the centre of the species' area
2. Germany is to a high degree responsible for a species: (a) more than 1/3 of the area or of the known population or records of a species is situated in Germany; (b) between 1/10 and 1/3 of the area or of the known population or records of a species is situated in Germany and Germany is in the centre of the species' area
3. Germany is to an especially high degree responsible for isolated (disjunct) outpost populations: (a) of glacial relict species (arcto-alpine or boreo-alpine); (b) isolated from the main area by geographical barriers, which can not be transcended.

A complete list of the arachnid species (spiders, harvestmen, pseudoscorpions) for which Germany is responsible is in preparation. The contribution here focuses on species which live in forests in the lower mountain ranges in the Strict Forest Reserves in Hesse (Central Germany). The totals of the three arachnid orders in Germany are about 1100 species. There are 50 arachnid species in the category '!', 12 in the category '(!)', and 9 in the category '!!'. 323 spider species, 18 harvestmen and 12 pseudoscorpions have been recorded in the Strict Forest Reserves in Hesse until now. For 11 spider species and 3 harvestmen species, Germany is responsible: 12 from the category '!' and two (spider) species from the category '!!' (*Oreonetides quadridentatus*, *Panamomops affinis*, both Linyphiidae).

This method to categorize species is a valuable additional instrument to evaluate the recorded species in single sites or site groups, besides the red data lists, rarity, originality of the habitats, niche breadth, habitat fixation, etc.

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