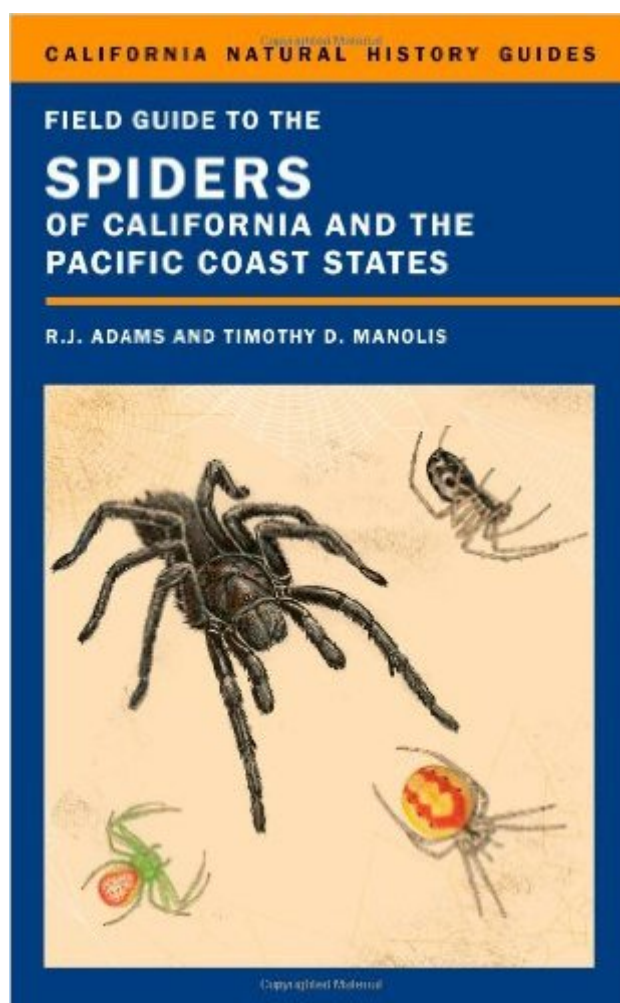


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# Field Guide To The Spiders Of California And The Pacific Coast States (California Natural History Guides)



## Synopsis

With over 40,000 described species, spiders have adapted to nearly every terrestrial environment across the globe. Over half of the world's spider families live within the three contiguous Pacific Coast states; not surprising considering the wide variety of habitats, from mountain meadows and desert dunes to redwood forests and massive urban centers. This beautifully illustrated, accessible guide covers all of the families and many of the genera found along the Pacific Coast, including introduced species and common garden spiders. The author provides readers with tools for identifying many of the region's spiders to family, and when possible, genus and species. He discusses taxonomy, distribution, and natural history as well as what is known of the habits of the spiders, the characters of families, and references to taxonomic revisions of the pertinent genera. Full-color plates for each family bring to life the incredible diversity of this ancient arachnid order.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I have been studying spiders for almost a decade and am intimately familiar with all the spider field guides currently on the market in North America. (There truly are not very many.) I would consider this book the single best regional field guide on spiders in the entire country. The taxonomy is current, the information excellent, and the color plates are beautiful and accurately represent each spider. For any budding arachnologist, this should definitely be one of the books in your arsenal. Congrats to RJ Adams & Tim Manolis for a job well done!

I just received my copy of Richard J. Adams "Field Guide to the Spiders of California and the Pacific States" and was most pleased with it. The color illustrations by Tim D. Manolis are alone worth the investment in buying the book. It joins books on North American spiders and ants, and California dragonflies and damselflies, as well as bees, published over the last few years by the University of California Press. All of these are excellent works. The current guide for California and the Pacific states is probably the best modern regional guide to spiders that I have seen. While final identification of most spiders requires examination of the sexual anatomy with a binocular microscope, this guide will probably get most specimens to the families and genera covered, with some help from a hand lens. The coverage is remarkable and includes all of the families known from the area covered. I do not know the author but have had correspondence with the illustrator. I was pleased to find three species that I described and named (two as sole author and one with Rick Vetter of the University of California-Riverside) discussed and illustrated. All three are recognizable from the excellent illustrations. A number of other species with which I am familiar were also easily recognized. I only wish such guide books had been available to me when I started out in arachnology. I recommend this book for anyone interested in the spider fauna of the Pacific Coast, and indeed it should serve fairly well in much of the western U.S.

This is a small yet hefty book with 300 text pages and 70 pages of plates containing 400+ color illustrations of California spiders. I found the text to be up to date, informative and with good references should you wish to take things further. It also seems to cover all the spider families found in California which is an achievement in itself. The use of illustrations rather than photographs has pros and cons. Comparing it with similar guides based on photographs (~350 photos in *A Guide to Spiders of Britain and Northern Europe* by D. Jones or ~200 photos in *Spiders of the Eastern United States* by Howell and Jenkins), my feeling is that photographs usually make for better identification. Having said that, when checking against the spiders I know well I can say that the illustrations would enable accurate identification (and [bugguide.com](http://bugguide.com) or [nathistoc.bio.uci.edu/spiders/index.htm](http://nathistoc.bio.uci.edu/spiders/index.htm) can always be viewed as a photographic supplement/confirmation). The only illustration I found surprising was the egg sac of *H. pluchei* in plate 9. I observed marbled cellar spiders around the outside of our house for several years and never saw the egg sac in the nursery web in the way illustrated. In fact I only observed it released by the female temporarily for feeding or mating. I guess I question why such an unusual event was illustrated rather than the normal holding of the egg sac by the chelicerae. It would be helpful to have a bit more background about how the illustrations were

made: were fresh specimens always used, how many of the species were observed in their wild habitat by the authors, and so on? With the exception of the widows and a few others, all the spiders are given more or less equal coverage. My preference would be that the commonly seen spiders always be illustrated and given a more detailed description. For example several Theridions are illustrated but not *T. melanarum* which is most often observed, being almost ubiquitous on door and window frames. It might enhance the usefulness of the book to include photographs next to the main text for the 30 or so most common CA spiders. One simple way to determine what is "common" is to count the number of submissions it has from California in bugguide. All the above are relatively minor quibbles: overall I rate this an above average field guide - and it is the only guide specifically about our California spiders.

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