Abstract

Intraspecific interactions of araneomorph spiders have received considerable attention, but there are few detailed studies on intraspecific interactions of mygalomorph spiders. Moreover, a thorough understanding of theraphosid biology and ecology is necessary from a conservation standpoint because natural populations may be threatened by habitat disturbances and captures for pet commerce. We described the behavior of conspecific individuals of Grammostola schulzei during non-sexual interactions, under laboratory conditions. Pairs of individuals involving adult males, adult females and juveniles were confronted and observed in resident and intruder conditions, totaling 115 trials. When confronted two adult females, they retreated or grappled, and performed gaping display with bite attempts, usually resulted in severe injury of the intruder spiders. When confronted females with large juveniles, we frequently observed cannibalism on juveniles. Juveniles exposed to females or to other juveniles retreated or made leg tapping with forelegs and palpal drumming, which are common displays of courting adult males. Adult males courted and clasped some juveniles, but juveniles avoided or reject clasping. The behaviors observed during intraspecific interactions could play an important role determining spatial distribution and could lead to behavioral adaptations of territoriality.

Keywords

Argentinean tarantulas, conspecific nonsexual interactions, behavior, territoriality.