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# PHOTO NOTES

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## JUMPING SPIDER



On 20 June 2009, I was scouting along the edge of a bog 14 km south of Creighton, SK, looking for long-jawed orb weavers to photograph. Meanwhile, my wife, Brenda, was checking out the few stunted trees, blueberries, and bog cranberries on the rocky outcrop. She spotted a spider on a fallen black spruce and called me over. I knew it was a jumping spider by its eye arrangement and its calm nature, but its large size and the buff-orange colour of its abdomen were unlike anything I'd seen before. Its abdominal markings blended in exceptionally well with the bark.

I quickly took pictures of it as I knew I'd need help with identification and used a ruler to get a rough size. It was between 10 and 15 mm long. When we got home, I uploaded a couple images to BugGuide, one of the many online resources for identification (<http://bugguide.net>); I also use [www.SpiderIdentification.org](http://www.SpiderIdentification.org)). There you will find entries from entomologists and naturalists who are committed to building an online knowledge base.

A discussion broke out on BugGuide as to whether the spider was *Phidippus borealis* or *P. purpuratus*. According to range maps referenced on BugGuide, both are native to Saskatchewan, with the range of *P. borealis* actually extending right up through the Northwest Territories and the Yukon as far as Old Crow. *P.*

*purpuratus*, on the other hand, is a more southern species, found in eastern Canada and the lower 48 states. On the map, the northern extent of its range in Saskatchewan is along the Canada–US border. As the discussion went on, the participants were leaning more to *P. borealis*, since specimens have been collected in Saskatchewan as far north as the NWT border; however, the only way to get a positive ID would be to capture the spider, preserve it in alcohol, and send it to someone who could examine its genitalia. I didn't want to do that. I was just thrilled that I got to see and photograph one of the largest jumping spiders in Saskatchewan.

- Harvey Schmidt, Creighton, SK

**EDITORS' NOTE:** For a different (colour) view of this jumping spider, see the outside back cover, and for more of Harvey Schmidt's fascinating photography, please visit his blog site at <http://spiders-n-stuff.blogspot.com/>