

Golden Orb-Weaver

Trichonephila clavipes

KINGDOM

Animalia

PHYLUM

Arthropoda

CLASS

Arachnida

ORDER

Araneae

FAMILY

Nephilidae

GENUS

Trichonephila

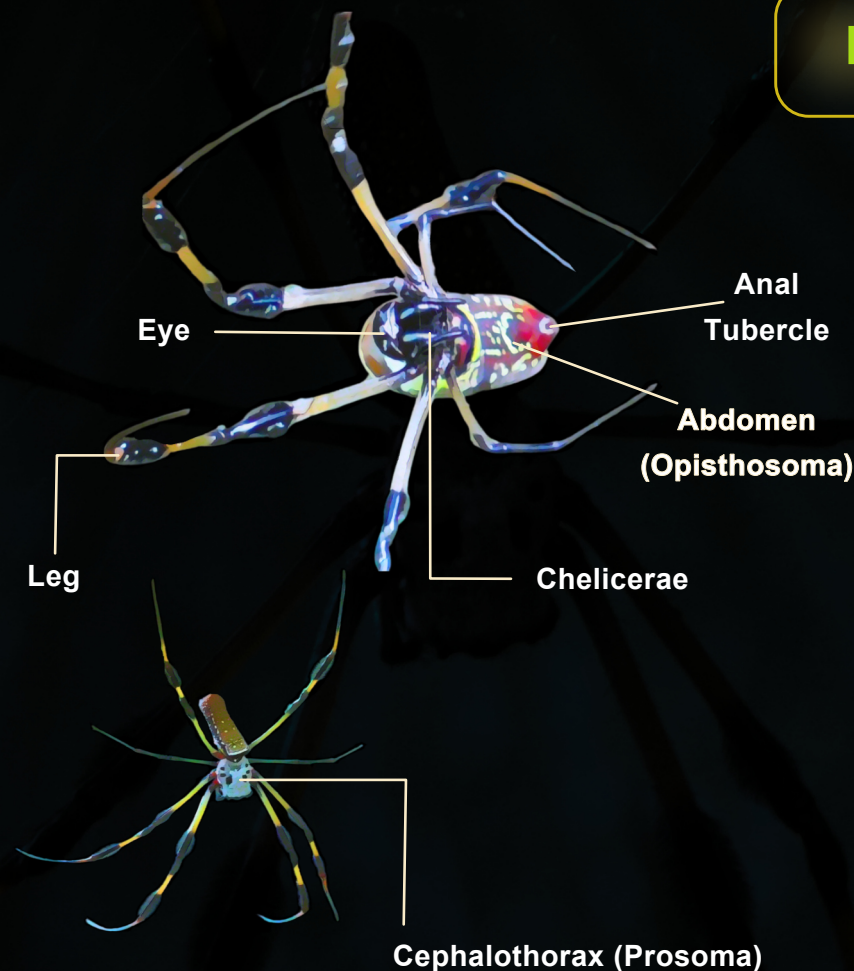
SPECIES

clavipes

INTRODUCTION

- The Golden orb-weaver is **indigenous** (native) to continental North and South America.
- The Golden orb-weaver is the largest orb weaving spider and one of the largest spiders in The Bahamas.
- These spiders go by other names such as the Banana Spider and Golden Silk Spider.
- Females can create massive webs. Sometimes over 3ft wide.
- They produce seven (7) different types of silks

Type	Characteristics & Uses
1. Tubuliform	forms the tough outer shell of egg cases
2. Aciniform	flexible and used for wrapping prey and insulating egg cases.
3. Minor ampullate	used as scaffolding during web building.
4. Major ampullate	strong and used in structures that requires stability (e.g center of webs).
5. Piriform	used to cement fibers and other structures together.
6. Flagelliform	very sticky and used in capturing of prey
7. Aggregate.	very sticky and used in capturing of prey



DID YOU KNOW !

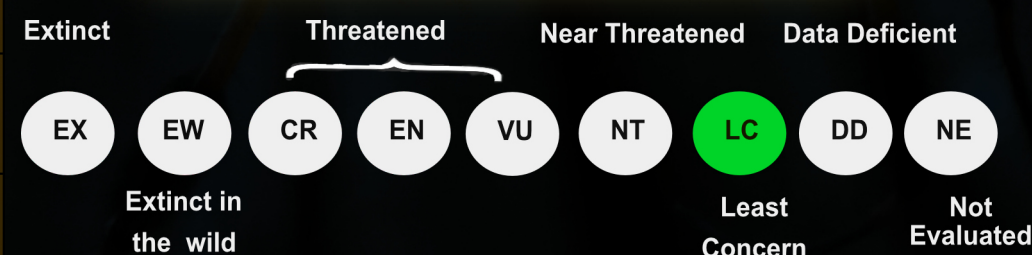
- There are 12 known species of Golden orb-weaver on Earth.
- Golden orb-weavers got their name from the golden colour of their silk, their red, brown and yellow colorations and spiral wheel shaped webs.
- Golden orb-weavers produce the second strongest natural fibre. Their silk has been of particular interest in biomedical and regenerative research involving the nervous system.

HABITAT

- Bahamian Dry (Coppice) forests
- Scrublands

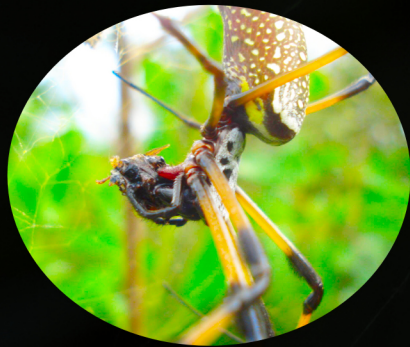


CONSERVATION STATUS



BEHAVIOUR AND DIET

- Females are normally seen in the centre of their webs. Males and **kleptoparasite** (parasitism by theft) spiders such as dewdrop spiders also occupy the web and may help with web maintenance by removing small insects that are caught in the web.
- Once a male Golden orb-weaver reaches maturity, it cannot create its own web and are dependent on females to survive.
- Golden orb-weavers eat arthropods (beetles, moths, grasshoppers etc.) (photo top right) and small vertebrates (lizards etc.)



REPRODUCTION

- Golden Orb Weavers are **sexually dimorphic**. This means that the same species exhibit various morphological characteristics (size, colour, behaviour etc.) In the case of this spider, females are significantly larger than their male companions with more intricate designs and bright colours (photo on right).
- Reproduction can be hazardous to male Golden Orb weavers who are sometimes killed during mating attempts.
- Females lay their eggs in a large greenish or yellowish coloured sacs.
- Depending on her health and fitness, she can lay several egg sacs, each containing hundreds of eggs. Egg sacs (photo on right) are often seen in the late summer and fall in The Bahamas.
- Female Golden Orb weavers live for about a year.
- Breeding season starts in February and ends in September.



THREATS

- Humans
- Parasites
- Habitat loss and degradation.



DISTRIBUTION

Legend

● T.clavipes



SUBSPECIES

NONE

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Website: <https://www.wild-bahamas.com>

Citation: Johnson, S. and Johnson, J. 2025. Wild Bahamas Fact Sheet, Golden orb-weaver.



Resources:

Nephila clavipes (Golden Orb Weaver), The Online Guide to the Animals of Trinidad and Tobago.

Babb, Paul L.; Lahens, Nicholas F.; Correa-Garhwal, Sandra M.; Nicholson, David N.; Kim, Eun Ji; Hogenesch, John B.; Kuntner, Matjaž; Higgins, Linden; Hayashi, Cheryl Y.; Agnarsson, Ingi; Voight, Benjamin F. (June 2017). "The *Nephila clavipes* genome highlights the diversity of spider silk genes and their complex expression" <https://www.nature.com/articles/ng.3852>

Bergmann, F., Stadlmayr, S., Millesi, F., Zeitlinger, M., Naghilou, A. and Radtke, C., 2022. The properties of native *Trichonephila* dragline silk and its biomedical applications. *Biomaterials Advances*, 140, p.213089.