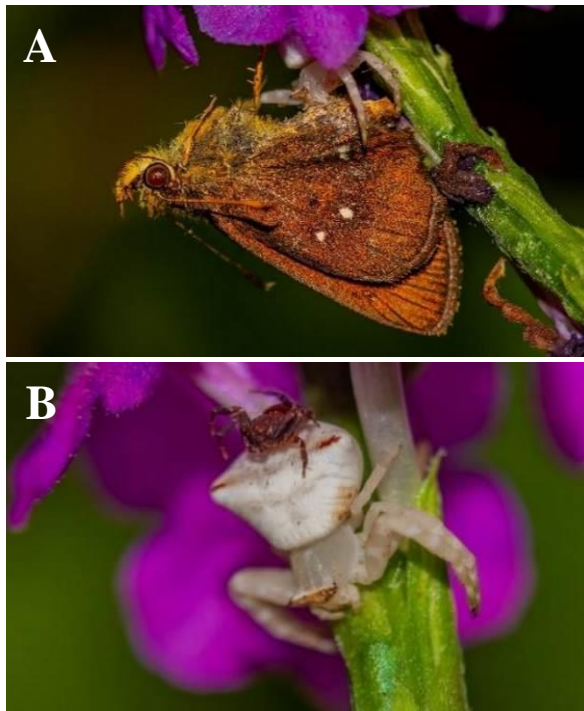




### **An opportunistic mating attempt of a flower crab spider (*Thomisus* sp.), India**

Flower crab spiders of the genus *Thomisus*, Walckenaer, 1805 have a crab-like habitus with its first two pairs of legs that are long and robust (Mondal *et al.* 2020). The *Thomisus* spiders do not build webs, but instead capture their prey using ambush, or sometimes by active pursuit hiding in flowers, leaves, and leaf litter (Tikader 1987). Some species flatten their bodies to hunt inside crevices or tree trunks under loose bark (Tikader 1971). Most of the *Thomisus* species are sexually dimorphic, males are much smaller than females (Singh *et al.* 2021). On 2 November 2020, I observed a female crab spider capturing a chestnut bob butterfly (*Lambrix salsala*) while it was trying to feed on the nectar of Jamaican spike flowers, *Stachytarpheta jamaicensis* (Verbenaceae) in the Butterfly Garden (Fig. 1A) located at Sanjay Gandhi National Park (SGNP), Maharashtra, India.



**Figure 1.** The female crab spider (A) feeds on *Lambrix salsala* butterfly and (B) mates with a male

SGNP is the sole protected area in the Mumbai District and the habitat is moist mixed deciduous semi-evergreen forest (Pradhan *et al.* 2005). On the next two days, when I visited again, possibly the same female crab spider was seen sitting in the same spot, but it had completed feeding on its prey and the remains were on the ground underneath. A small, brown-colored male crab spider was spotted on the female's back seeming to mate with her (Fig. 1B). It is already known that in mating the male climbs onto the female's back and accompanies it, sometimes for days (Mondal *et al.* 2020). On the same day, in the afternoon, the male was seen a little away from the female but on the same plant and safe, which meant that the male had not been cannibalized.

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