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Jumping spiders (Araneae: Salticidae) in Afrotropical canopies

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Canopy jumping spiders were collected with the pyrethrum knockdown method at 15 localities in fairly different habitats ranging from lowland forest (Ghana, Congo) over montane forest (Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania) to wooded savannah (Ivory Coast, Tanzania, Cameroon, South Africa). In four localities, three of which were savannah, the shrub layer was sampled by beating and sweeping.

The collections contain 262 species of which an estimated 60% was estimated to be new to science. Salticids range among the most abundant spiders in the canopy but tend to be relatively more important in wooded savannah than in dense forest.

A cluster analysis reveals that the salticid fauna from savannah trees is clearly different from that of all forest types. It is surprising that the shrub and canopy layer faunas cluster together for each locality indicating that this family, in contrast with other families like oonopids and linyphiids, does not present a highly specialized canopy assemblage.