



Solofuges (Family Solofugae)

Pseudo-Scorpions of the Sun

Solofuges are also known by many other common names including solofuges, sun spiders, camel spiders, and/or wind scorpions. Although solofuges bear a resemblance to both, they are neither true spiders nor scorpions, but rather belong to their own order of arachnids known as the Solofugae. Solofuges possess only two tagmata (segments) including a tailless ophistosoma (abdomen) and a prosoma (which include the head and thorax). They also possess five (5) pairs of legs and a set of compound eyes atop their heads, although the anterior most pair of legs are actually pedipalps. Solofuges are aggressive and voracious predators of many insects, arthropods and other invertebrates, other arachnids, and even other smaller animals, which they use their large pedipalps and chelicerae to locate, capture, and consume. The most distinctive feature of all solofugids are their pair of very large chelicerae, each with a set of pincer-like joints used for gripping and dismantling prey.

Taxonomy

Life: All living, physical, and animate entities

Domain: Eukaryota

Kingdom: Animalia

Phylum: Arthropoda

Subphylum: Chelicerata

Class: Arachnida

Order: Solifugae

**Taxonomy subject to change and revision.*

Lifespan and Longevity

Captive and wild longevity of solofuges is unknown/uncertain.

Distribution and Habitat

Solofuges consist of well over 1,000 species from 153 genera, with most usually being found in arid to semi-arid desert, grassland, or scrublands on all continents except Antarctica and Australia. It is uncertain which species are most commonly kept or imported into the pet trade, although several species appear in the pet trade.

Conservation Status

Conservation status dependent upon the species. Some species are IUCN Least Concern (LC). Some are IUCN Near Threatened (NT), Conservation Dependent (CD), Vulnerable (VU),

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Endangered (EN), to Critically Endangered (CE). Some Not Evaluated for the IUCN Red List (NE) or otherwise Data Deficient (DD).

Legal and Regulatory Status (*Subject to Change)

Consult with your local, municipal, and state ordinances and regulations for any ownership restrictions.

Experience Level Required

Advanced.

Size

Depending on the species, solofuges can be small to large arachnids which range in size from only a few millimeters or ½ an inch to 5 to 6 inches.

Housing and Enclosure

Solofuges are more active wanderers than most tarantulas or other commonly kept arachnids, and should be provided with adequate space. Provide a sturdy, secure, and absolutely escape proof terrarium or enclosure 10 to 15 gallons in size with a secure top for a single adult solofuge. Several of the acrylic displays and enclosures that are now manufactured for housing arachnids, insects, and other invertebrates can also be used. Floor space is more important than height for these arachnids. Do not house multiple solofuges together within the same enclosure; these arachnids are best housed separately. For substrate, solofuges can be provided with at least 5 to 8 inches of substrate. Acceptable substrate to use can include slightly play sand, mixed with peat moss and/or chemical and pesticide free potting soil. Also provide sufficient hiding opportunities for these arachnids as well as other cage furnishings and hide boxes, cork, or bark slabs, and similar furniture. A fairly large, shallow water dish can also be provided, and should be cleaned regularly. Depending on the species, maintain humidity at 60 to 75% for solofuges, most of which are desert or arid dwelling species.

Temperature, Lighting, and Humidity

Most species of solofuges have simple and undemanding heating and lighting requirements in captivity, and do not require additional UVA/UVB lighting, although providing it can be greatly beneficial for your solofuge's health, immune system, and overall wellness. Solofuges can be maintained at a warm area of 80 to 85 degrees F, with a nighttime or ambient/low temperature being around 75 degrees F (not to fall substantially above or below this range). For any supplemental heating that may be needed, use a low wattage incandescent or UVA/UVB bulb, radiant or ceramic heat emitter, or UTH (under tank heating element). More specific lighting, heating, and humidity product suggestions and recommendations that can best suit one's needs, as well as those of one's animals can be given as well.

Feeding, Diet, and Nutrition

Insectivorous to Carnivorous; In the wild, solofuges tarantulas are primarily insectivorous to carnivorous, meaning they eat insects and other invertebrates. They will also often eat smaller vertebrates as well if they can catch and subdue them. In captivity, these unusual arachnids can be fed a variety of appropriately sized feeder insects such as crickets, roaches, mealworms, superworms, and waxworms. Feeder insects should be gut-loaded in order to increase their optimal nutritional value. This will promote optimal exoskeleton growth and development. Any uneaten food items should be cleaned and removed after a day or two. Their feeding frequency will depend on the age, size, and overall health of your animal. Use care as to not overfeed even invertebrates, as obesity and other health related issues can still become an issue with them.

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More specific dietary and supplementary product suggestions and recommendations that can best suit one's needs, as well as those of one's animals can be given as well.

Handling

Although they do not possess venom or a stinger, solofuges are fast moving and aggressive arachnids that can deliver a very painful bite using their large chelicerae. Therefore, handling these arachnids is typically not recommended. If they are to be handled, caution should be utilized. As with most invertebrates, they are also fragile animals, and accidentally dropping one can result in the rupture of its internal organs and/or exoskeleton, causing death to your solofuge. **Also be sure to practice basic cleanliness and hygiene associated with proper husbandry after touching or handling any animals or animal enclosures to prevent the possibility of contracting salmonellosis or any other zoonotic pathogens**

Contact

Authored by Eric Roscoe. For any additional questions, comments, and/or concerns regarding this animal, group of animals, or this care sheet, please email and contact the Madison Area Herpetological Society at info@madisonherps.org

Disclaimer: Note that the information provided in these, or any care sheets, are not intended to be all-exhaustive, and further research and care should always be sought and provided when it comes to any species one may prospectively be interested in. These care sheets are also not intended to serve as substitutes for professional veterinary medical care and husbandry should any animal require it. Always seek proper and professional veterinary care for any animal should the need arise, and be prepared ahead of time for any and all husbandry costs and expenses that may occur with any animal beyond the initial purchase. Any animal owned is ultimately a matter of personal/individual care and responsibility. MAHS cannot make any claims or guarantees regarding any information in this care sheet therein. This care sheet may be reprinted or redistributed only in its entirety, including any and all MAHS logos and disclaimers.

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