The windscorpion, *Eremobates pallipes* (order Solifugae), is a predatory arachnid related to spiders (Fig. 1). Other names include camel spider and sun spider, but it is neither a spider (order Araneae) nor a scorpion (order Scorpioidea). Windscorpions are common in California’s San Joaquin Valley and arid sections of the Southwest.

**IDENTIFICATION**

The windscorpion is 3/4 to 1 1/2 inches long and yellowish brown. It has a rounded abdomen and no stinger. Unlike spiders, it doesn’t have venom glands or web-spinning organs, and unlike scorpions, it doesn’t have pincers.

Windscorpions have large, pincerlike jaws and a large pair of leglike organs called pedipalps that are located on the head or cephalothorax region (Fig. 2). They use their pedipalps to seize and pass prey to their jaws, where they crush it.

The windscorpion has four pairs of legs, but it walks only on the last three pairs while using the first pair as feelers. The windscorpion is so named because its long legs enable it to run swiftly or “like the wind.”

**HABITS**

Windscorpions feed primarily on living insects, spiders, and other small creatures such as lizards that they catch. They are active mostly at night, but you also might see them moving about during the day. They can appear on roads and paths and sometimes enter buildings. During the day they hide beneath stones and other objects or in burrows. The female lays about 50 eggs in a burrow that she digs into the soil. She then guards the burrow until the young hatch.

**MANAGEMENT**

Windscorpions occasionally cause concern when they enter buildings at night while seeking their prey. Although they look fierce, windscorpions can’t seriously harm people. They can bite if you handle them but do this only in self defense or if you restrain them. Because they don’t have poison glands, their bite isn’t serious.

If you find one indoors, catch and release it outside. To catch a windscorpion, place a jar over it, then slip a piece of paper beneath the jar to form a seal over the opening. Carry the jar outside and release the windscorpion. To prevent them from entering your home, seal any cracks or openings around the foundation and beneath doors.

No chemical control measures are recommended for windscorpions. Windscorpions are regarded as beneficial, because they feed on insects. Their harmless nature to people also should discourage control.

**REFERENCES**


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