Ocular Changes Accompanying Eye Loss in the Spider Family Uloboridae

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ABSTRACT In uloborid spiders, eye loss is accompanied by increased visual angles, optical material investment, and potential visual acuity of the retained eyes. Relative to carapace volume, the six-eyed *Hyptiotes cavatus* and two four-eyed *Miagrammopes* species have greater retinal hemisphere areas and lens volumes than do the eight-eyed uloborids *Waitkera waitkerensis*, *Uloborus glomosus*, and *Octonoba sinensis*. In *Waitkera*, in which the eyes have little visual overlap, and in *Miagrammopes*, in which eye loss simplifies the spiders' patterns of visual overlap, increased retinal cell density enhances potential visual acuity. However, this occurs at the expense of potential retinal cell sensitivity.

Most members of the spider family Uloboridae construct horizontal orb-webs. However, one lineage is characterized by web simplification, typified by the vertical triangle-webs spun by members of the temperate genus Hyptiotes (Opell, '82; Peters, '38) and the irregular, few-stranded webs spun by members of the tropical genus Miagrammopes (Lubin, '86; Lubin et al., '78). These changes in web form necessitate changes in web-monitoring tactics. Whereas orb-weavers hang beneath the hubs of their webs and run to wrap prey that become ensnared, reduced-web uloborids more actively monitor and manipulate their webs during prey capture (Opell, '85, '87).

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These behavioral changes are facilitated by leg reorientation made possible by reorganization of the prosomal muscles that insert on the leg bases (Opell, '84a). In reducedweb uloborids, the more paraxial orientation of these muscles requires lateral shifts in their origins on the carapace and endosternite. In turn, lateral expansion of the endosternite necessitates lateral shifts in the origins of its suspensor muscles. In reducedweb uloborids, both sets of muscles insert in carapace regions that in orb-weavers are occupied by the anterior eyes. Thus, this muscle reorganization appears to contribute to the altered carapace shape, eye relocation, and eye loss characteristic of Hyptiotes and Miagrammopes (Fig. 1).

Changes in anatomy and orientation of the remaining eyes of these reduced-web uloborids help conserve their total visual surveillance and maintain their patterns of visual overlap (Opell and Cushing, '86; Opell and Ware, '87). This is achieved principally by expanding and ventrally shifting the eves' visual angles. An eye's visual angle can be increased by changing its lens parameters (increasing lens thickness, front and rear radii of curvature, and refractive index), by reducing the distance between its rear lens surface and retinal hemisphere, and by perimetrically expanding its retinal hemisphere. Because they involve material expenditure, lens volume (which accounts for both lens thickness and curvature) and retinal surface area lend themselves to comparative studies.

Two qualitative aspects of vision, acuity and sensitivity, can also be estimated from eye anatomy. The greater the number of retinal cells relative to an eye's visual angle, the finer-grain image it receives. However, even if the light-gathering ability (f-number) of the eye's lens remains unchanged, the reduction in retinal cell diameters that enhances its acuity also diminishes retinal sensitivity to a degree not easily compensated for by increased retinal cell length (Blest and Lang, '77). Thus, greater resolution can only be gained at the expense of light sensitivity.

The purpose of this study is to evaluate two



HYPTIOTES

MIAGRAMMOPES

Fig. 1. Carapaces of species studied, showing differences in eye placement and number. *Miagrammopes* sp. is at the center, and *M. animotus* is at the right.

additional changes that should characterize the eyes of reduced-web uloborids. First, to compensate for eye loss, the material invested in their remaining eyes should exceed that found in the homologous eyes of orbweavers and, consequently, their total ocular investments should more closely approximate those of orb-weavers than their eve numbers alone predict. Second, because eye loss reduces the complex patterns of visual overlap found in advanced orb-weavers and, thereby, the spiders' potential for detecting motion and evaluating distances (Forster, '82; Opell and Cushing, '86; Opell and Ware, '87), the eyes of reduced-web uloborids and those of primitive orb-weavers with little visual overlap should compensate for this by having

greater visual acuity than those of orb-weavers.

MATERIALS AND METHODS Specimen fixation and sectioning

Adult females of six species were used in this study: the primitive New Zealand orbweaver Waitkera waitkerensis, the Asian orbweaver Octonoba sinensis (which, as a United States introduction was known as O. octonaria until synomized by Yoshida '80), the eastern North American orb-weaver Uloborus glomosus, the eastern North American triangle-weaver Hyptiotes cavatus, the Puerto Rican "single-line-weaver," Miagrammopes animotus, and an undescribed Costa Rican Miagrammopes species, belonging to the

Miagrammopes aspinatus species group (Opell, '84b). Represented genera are related as follows: (Waitkera ((Hyptiotes Miagrammopes) (Uloborus Octonoba))) [Opell, '79, '84b]. Specimens were anesthetized with carbon dioxide (only W. waitkerensis was not so treated, as it was collected, fixed, transferred to buffer, and mailed to me), fixed at 20-26°C for 12-18 hours in 3% glutaraldehyde/3% formaldehyde in 0.1 M sodium cacodylate buffer (pH 7.3), rinsed in 0.1 M sodium cacodylate buffer, dehydrated through a graded series of acetone, and embedded in Spurr's epoxy resin. One-micron-thick serial cross sections were made with a Sorvall JB-4 microtome and stained with toluidine blue.

Measurements used to determine retinal hemisphere area, lens volume, and effective retinal cell length were taken from cross sections through the center of each eye (Fig. 2A). Those used to compute retinal cell diameter and density were taken from cross and sagittal sections through the posterior and lateral regions of an eye's retinal hemisphere (2B).

Retinal hemisphere area and retinal cell number

To compute retinal hemisphere area, I first determined (by plotting) the center and radius of curvature of the reconstructed retinae (presented in Opell and Cushing, '86; and Opell and Ware, '87) and the angle from the center that included the dorsal- and ventralmost retinal cells. Using these measurements, I computed the retinal area as if it were a sphere, multiplied this area by the measured angle just cited, and then divided the product by 360 degrees to determine the actual retinal area.

I determined retinal cell density from enlarged micrographs of retinal regions sectioned perpendicular to the retinal cell axes (Fig. 2B). The surface area of a region of welldefined cells and their intervening pigment was measured with a Numonics electromagnetic digitizing tablet interfaced with an IBM pc running Sigma-Scan[®] software. Using scale marks inscribed on each photographic negative prior to printing enlargements, I converted this measurement to μm^2 and divided it by the number of retinal cells included in the region whose surface area was measured. This calculation yields the average surface area of a retinal cell and its associated pigment. The inverse of this value gives retinal cell density, and dividing



Fig. 2. Cross sections through the center of the retinal hemisphere and lens (A) and through the periphery of the retinal hemisphere (B) of a *Miagrammopes animotus* posterior median eye. The radiating lines in A are the eight measurements used to compute the lens' mean radius. Scale bar = $50 \mu m$.

this value into a retinal hemisphere's total surface area estimates an eye's total retinal cell number.

Lens volume

Lens volume was also determined from enlarged photographs of cross or sagittal sections through the center of each lens (Fig. 2A). Sagittal sections were used for the anteriorly directed anterior median eyes (AME), and cross sections were used for the remaining eyes. The cross-sectional surface area of each lens was measured with a digitizing tablet. Lens volume was then computed as if the lens were a sphere by multiplying its cross-sectional area by 4/3 the lens' mean radius (as determined from the eight measurements shown in Fig. 2A).

Size-specific indexes

Several relative indexes were used to compare the eyes of the six species studied. To obtain relative retinal hemisphere areas and lens volumes, I divided absolute values by the volume of each species' prosoma. To de-termine prosomal volume, I drew each species' carapace with the aid of a camera lucida, measured separately the surface areas of cephalic (ocular) and thoracic regions with a digitizing tablet, measured the dorsal-ventral thickness of cross sections through each region, multiplied each area by its respective thickness, and summed the resulting volumes. To determine relative retinal cell density I divided an eye's total visual angle by its total number of retinal cells. The greater this value the more potential an eye has for resolving detail.

Relative light absorbance

Although f-number (focal length/lens aperture) is a useful index of a lens' ability to admit light, it does not account for retinal cell sensitivity. The following index of the relative amount of light absorbed per receptor (R) was used by Blest and Land ('77) and incorporates both an eye's light-gathering ability and potential retinal cell sensitivity. The greater this value, the more sensitive are an eye's retinal cells.

$$\mathbf{R} = (\mathbf{A}/\mathbf{F})^2 \, \mathbf{d}^2 \, (1 \, - \, \mathbf{e}^{-\mathbf{k}\mathbf{x}})$$

In this equation A = the lens' entrance pupil diameter, F =the lens' focal length, d = retinal cell diameter, k = light absorption coefficient of the retinal cell, and $\mathbf{x} =$ length of the absorbing segment of the retinal cell. All measurements but k are in μ m. As the light absorption coefficient for spider eyes has never been experimentally determined, I follow Blest and Land's ('77) approach of letting k = 0.01 per μ m, a value similar to that reported for other arthropods (Hays and Goldschmith, '69; Kirschfeld, '69). Focal lengths and entrance pupil diameters used in this equation were taken from Opell and Cushing ('86) and Opell and Ware ('87). Retinal cell diameters and lengths were measured from crossand sagittal-section photographs.

Comparisons of total ocular investments

If reduced-web uloborids compensate for eye loss by investing more material in their remaining eyes, then their total relative retinal hemisphere areas and total relative lens volumes should be greater than their eye numbers alone predict. That is, in *H. cavatus* these values should be more than 3/4 those of orb-weavers, and in *Miagrammopes* species they should be more than 1/2 those of orb-weavers.

However, the small anterior lateral eyes (ALE) of orb-weavers lower these predicted values by basing their ocular investments largely on the values of three rather than four eyes. To overcome this problem and to provide a more conservative test, I based predicted values on the three largest eyes of each orb-weaving species. This I achieved by multiplying the sum of each orb-weaving species' three greatest relative retinal hemisphere areas and three greatest relative lens volumes by 1.333. The means of these adiusted total relative values for the three orbweaving species were used to predict values against which those of reduced-web species were compared.

RESULTS

In most cases, the relative retinal hemisphere areas (Table 1) and relative lens volumes (Table 2) of the posterior eyes of reduced-web uloborids exceed those of the homologous eyes of orb-weavers, the only exception being that the posterior median eves (PME) of Waitkera waitkerensis have 10% greater relative retinal hemisphere areas and 18% greater relative lens volumes than those of Miagrammopes animotus. The AMEs of H. cavatus have smaller values than those of orb-weavers. Compared with mean values for the three orb-weavers, the PME of H. cavatus. M. animotus, and Miagrammopes sp. have relative retinal hemisphere areas and relative lens volumes that are, respectively, 2.0 and 1.8, 1.6 and 1.5, and 2.2 and 2.0 times greater. The posterior lateral eyes (PLE) of these reduced-web species have values that are, respectively, 4.0 and 1.9, 3.7 and 1.9, and 2.4 and 2.9 times greater than those of the orb-weavers.

As a consequence of these changes, the total ocular investment by reduced-web uloborids is, relative to carapace volume, greater than eye number alone predicts. In *H. cavatus* total relative retinal hemisphere area is 1.9 times greater, and total relative lens volume is 1.3 times greater than expected. In *M. animotus* they are, respectively, 2.0 and 1.5 times greater than expected and in *Mia*-

Species & carapace volume $(\times 10^6 \ \mu m^3)$		Retinal hemisphere			Retinal hemisphere area/ carapace yolume	R	Retinal ce	ll area	Total	Vieual	Potinal calls
	Eye	Radius (µm)	Angle (°)	Area (µm ²)	$(\mu m^2/\mu m^3 \times 10^{-8})$	\overline{X} (μm^2)	SD	Sections/ specimens	retinal	angle ¹ (°)	per degree of visual angle
Waitkera waitkerensis (1,173)	AME ALE PME PLE	$44 \\ 18 \\ 105 \\ 54$	95 214 57 78	6,257 2,420 21,537 7,939	534 206 1,837 677	$\begin{array}{c} 42.0 \\ 52.4 \\ 51.8 \\ 64.7 \end{array}$	$12.1 \\ 23.7 \\ 5.4 \\ 12.7$	3/2 3/2 4/3 5/3	149 46 416 123	48 29 59 37	3.1 1.6 7.1 3.3
Total Uloborus glomosus (1,222)	AME ALE PME PLE	61 32 65 31	65 129 64 98	38,153 <i>8,305</i> 4,593 9,294 3,182	$3,254 \\ 679 \\ 376 \\ 760 \\ 260$	<i>38.5</i> 45.9 75.5 86.4	11.5 12.2 6.2 11.6	4/3 2/2 5/3 3/2	734 <i>216</i> 100 123 37	173 57 67 71 47	$(3.8) \\ 3.8 \\ 1.5 \\ 1.7 \\ 0.8$
Total Octonoba sinensis (1,711)	AME ALE PME PLE	56 20 50 31	182 53 101 62	25,374 20,066 722 8,639 2,080	2,075 1,173 42 505 122	40.8 46.7 76.7 77.6	$2.3 \\ 1.8 \\ 16.3 \\ 7.7$	2/1 2/1 3/1 2/1	476 <i>492</i> 16 113 27	$242 \\ 182 \\ 53 \\ 101 \\ 62$	$(2.0) \\ 2.7 \\ 0.3 \\ 1.1 \\ 0.4$
Total Hyptiotes cavatus (818)	AME ALE PME PLE	57 — 60 59	64 — 132 95	31,507 <i>7,132</i> 16,525 11,543	1,842 872 2,020 1,411	67.5 	18.7 	2/2 	$648 \\ 106 \\ - \\ 214 \\ 155$	398 <i>70</i> 107 94	$(1.1) \\ 1.5 \\ - \\ 2.0 \\ 1.7$
Total Miagrammopes animotus (1,055)	PME PLE	73 63	94 99	$35,200 \\ 17,486 \\ 13,716$	4,304 1,657 1,300	28.4 38.2	$5.5\\8.2$	3/1 3/1	475 616 359	$\begin{array}{c} 271\\ 83\\ 70\end{array}$	(1.7) 7.4 5.1
Total Miagrammopes sp. (964)	PME PLE	71 52	$\begin{array}{c} 123\\ 84 \end{array}$	21,796 8,012	2,956 2,260 831	33.2 28.6	1.9 —	4/1 1/1	975 657 280	153 123 84	(6.3) 5.3 3.3
Total			31,202	29,808	3,091				937	207	(4.3)

TABLE 1. Absolute and relative retinal cell numbers and measurements used in their determination

¹From Opell and Cushing ('86) and Opell and Ware ('87).

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Species	Eye	Lens area (µm ²)	Radius (µm)	Lens volume $(\mu m^3 \times 10^3)$	No.	Lens volume/ carapace volume $(\mu m^3/\mu m^3 \times 10^6)$
Waitkera	AME	7,574 (728)	47 (2)	479 (67)	2	408
waitkerensis	ALE	3,516	32	150	1	128
	PME	9,315	53	655	1	558
m	FLE	0,992	47	437	1	373
Total				1,721		1,467
Uloborus	AME	6,213 (570)	42 (3)	345 (52)	4	282
glomosus	ALE	2,388 (202)	27(1)	85 (11)	3	69
	PME	4,158 (187)	36(1)	198 (15)	2	162
	PLE	2,951 (740)	30 (3)	119 (40)	3	98
Total				747		611
Octonoba	AME	8,769	51	594	1	347
sinensis	ALE	3,812	34	173	î	101
	\mathbf{PME}	6,581	43	375	ī	219
	\mathbf{PLE}	5,469	41	295	1	173
Total				1,437		840
Hyptiotes	AME	3,094 (284)	29 (3)	121(22)	2	148
cavatus	ALE	789	14	15	1	18
	PME	7,306 (2,991)	46 (10)	465 (282)	$\overline{2}$	569
	PLE	5,945 (797)	32 (3)	337 (66)	3	412
Total				938		1,147
Miagrammopes	PME	7,819 (273)	48 92)	499 (34)	2	472
animotus	PLE	7,024 (53)	46 (1)	428 (1)	$\overline{2}$	406
	Total			927		878
Miagrammopes	PME	8.879	51	607	1	630
sp.	PLE	8,910	51	609	1	632
Total				1,216		1,262

TABLE 2. Absolute and relative lens volumes and measurements used in their determination (standard deviation is given in parentheses)

grammopes sp. they are 2.1 and 2.2 times greater than expected.

The retinal cells of each eye are indistinguishable on the basis of size or structure. Relative retinal cell density (Table 1) is greatest in the eyes of uloborids that have the least visual overlap. The anterior eyes of W. waitkerensis exhibit no visual overlap, and the posterior eyes overlap only one another's visual fields (Opell and Ware, '87). This species has a mean retinal cell density that is 1.9 times that of Uloborus glomosus and 3.5 times that of Octonoba sinensis. Despite loss of its ALE, H. cavatus loses little of its total visual overlap (Opell and Ware, '87) and has a mean retinal cell density intermediate between U. glomosus and O. sinensis. With only one-half the number of eyes of the orb-weavers, the two Miagrammopes species have a mean retinal cell density that is 2.3 times greater than that of the three orb-weavers and 3.3 times as large as the mean for U. glomosus and O. sinensis.

The similarity of f-numbers between the *Miagrammopes-Hyptiotes* lineage and the most closely related uloborid studied, *U. glomosus* (Table 3), shows that the light-gathering abilities of reduced-web uloborid eyes (lenses) are conserved as their visual angles increase. When compared with *M. animotus*, the more highly derived species *Miagrammopes* sp. (Opell, '84b) shows a 0.35 reduction in PLE's f-number, a change that permits 25% more light to strike its retinal cells. Despite this light-gathering ability, the smaller retinal cell diameters of *Miagrammopes* result in their having relative light absorbance values that average 0.67 those of the homologous eyes of orb-weavers.

DISCUSSION

Previous studies quantify the mechanisms and visual consequences of ocular changes associated with eye loss in reduced-web uloborids (Opell and Cushing, '86; Opell and Ware, '87). This investigation shows that

		f-No. ¹	I	Retinal cell diameter			Retinal cell effective length		
Species	Eye		Ŷ	SD	No.	X	SD	No.	absorbance
Waitkera	AME	1.2	5.7	0.4	14	17.5	0.0	3	3.9
waitkerensis	ALE	1.2	5.9	0.7	12	13.1	2.4	4	2.8
	PME	1.3	5.6	0.3	14	18.4	1.2	5	3.4
	PLE	1.3	6.1	0.8	13	16.2	1.9	3	3.5
	Mean	1.3							3.4
Uloborus	AME	0.9	6.1	1.0	14	16.3	2.5	4	6.4
glomosus	ALE	1.0	4.9	1.1	12	15.5	1.1	5	3.3
8	PME	1.1	6.0	0.5	14	18.0	0.0	3	5.6
	PLE	1.2	7.0	1.5	12	15.8	1.3	7	5.1
	Mean	1.1							5.1
Octonoba	AME	0.8	5.3	0.7	12	17.5	0.0	5	6.7
sinensis	ALE	0.6	4.9	0.5	10	16.7	1.4	3	8.8
0111011010	PME	0.8	5.2	0.8	10	16.5	2.2	5	6.6
	PLE	0.8	5.0	0.7	14	17.5		1	6.5
	Mean	0.8							7.2
Hyntiotes	AME	0.9	5.2	0.4	12	15.0	0.0	3	4.8
cavatus	ALE	1.7	_		11		_	—	
	PME	1.0	5.7	0.5	14	23.6	3.2	7	7.7
	PLE	0.9	6.1	0.5	14	22.7	1.9	7	9.7
	Mean	1.1							7.4
Miagrammones	PME	1.0	4.9	0.4	14	18.6	1.6	7	4.0
animotus	PLE	1.1	4.3	0.3	14	17.9	1.5	7	2.3
	Mean	1.0	2.0	2.0		_110		•	3.2
Miagrammones	PME	1.0	41	02	14	18.7	1.3	7	2.9
en	PLE	0.8	41	0.3	14	14.2	2.0	6	3.6

TABLE 3. Relative light absorbance and visual benefit cost indexes and measurements used in their determination

¹f.Nos. and the entrance pupil diameters and focal lengths from which they were calculated are taken from Opell and Cushing ('86) and Opell and Ware ('87).

these adaptations also entail a number of congruent qualitative changes with the potential to compensate for eye loss by enhancing the visual acuity of the remaining eyes. As eye number decreases, more retinal and lens material is invested in the remaining eyes.

Mean

0.9

sp.

The size reduction of Miagrammopes retinal cells that enhances their eyes' potential visual acuity (Table 1) does so at the expense of their retinal cells' relative light absorbance (Table 3). However, even the lowest value of 2.3 is 11 times greater than Blest and Land ('77) report for the large primary eyes of jumping spiders. Thus, the eyes of Miagrammopes probably function effectively at daytime light levels present in the tropical forest understory where these spiders are typically found.

However, unlike members of the family Deinopidae, whose PME relative light absorbance values of 495 (Blest and Land, '77) permit them to hunt at night (Baum, '38; Coddington and Sobrevila, '87; Roberts, '55; Robinson and Robinson, '71), the eyes of Miagrammopes probably afford little night vision. If the vision of reduced-web uloborids serves principally to detect diurnal, visually hunting predators, then enhanced visual acuity would be of greater value to them than would visual sensitivity that extended farther into the early morning and late evening hours when the threat of predation is slight. The increased retinal cell density and reduced retinal cell diameter that characterized Miagrammopes is consistent with Blest and Land's ('77) contention that spider retinal cells do not pool their signals. Pooled units of retinal cells would function as enlarged retinal cells and would have no selective advantage in situations where visual acuity was favored. However, it is possible that, just as in vertebrate eyes (Levine, '85), pooling occurs at low light levels, permitting the eyes to function but reducing their resolution.

Relative retinal cell number and lens volume and relative retinal cell density (Tables 1, 2) show the PME of Waitkera waitkerensis to be surprisingly well developed, both relative to the other eyes of this species and to the eyes of other orb-weavers and of Hyp-

3.3

tiotes cavatus. Coddington ('86a,b) concludes that Deinopidae is the sister group of Uloboridae. These "ogre-faced" spiders take their common name from the extremely large and well developed PME (Blest and Land, '77) used by members of the family's most common genus, Deinopis, to detect prey and direct their forward prey-capture strike (Baum, '38; Coddington and Sobrevila, '87; Roberts, '55; Robinson and Robinson, '71). Although members of the less highly derived genus Menneus use similar prev-capture tactics (Mascord, '70), their eyes are more nearly the same size and the ratio of their diameters suggests a grade of development similar to that of W. waitkerensis. The mean ratios for eight Menneus species are AME: 0.8, ALE: 0.7, PME: 1.0, PLE: 0.9. (Coddington and Opell, unpublished observations). This similarity suggest that the well-developed PME of uloborids is a plesiomorphic character of the two sister families that favored the increase in size of these eves in the genus Deinopis.

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