Klamath Network Featured Creature

February 2015

Jumping Spider

(Prob. *Phidippus johnsoni*)

General Description:
Jumping Spiders are members of the spider family Salticidae, the largest family of spiders with over 5,000 described species. Their body size is small to medium (although if you are arachnophobic, they probably look the size of a horse). Jumping Spiders are often covered by a dense covering of iridescent scales or hairs.

Like most spiders, they have eight eyes, but jumping spiders are distinguished by the large size of their anterior median eyes and the patterning of their eyes.

Habitat and Ecology:
Jumping Spiders are found in a variety of habitats, including vegetation, wood piles, rocky habitats, and your sock drawer. Okay, maybe or maybe not in your sock drawer – but they do like buildings as much as any other spider.

They are day-time predators, using their large eyes to visually and actively hunt for small invertebrate prey, like ants and fruit flies. Because of this, they generally do not spin webs like other spiders, although they do use their silk as an anchor line for when they ambush their unsuspecting prey.

A very cute Jumping Spider;
Photo: Eric Dinger

They will often make a sac-like silken retreat for molting, hibernating, or simply spending the night.

This spider is likely a Johnson's Jumping Spider (aka Red-Backed Jumping Spider), which usually live for about one year. Cannibalism of the male during reproduction has been observed in this family.

An admittedly blurry shot of Eric's new pet.
Photo: Eric Dinger

Did you know?

- Yeah, they actually do bite – but need to be provoked. The bites are painful, but not deadly.
- With their eight eyes, they can see almost 360°. This makes it hard to sneak up on them!
- The latin name of the probable species in the photo, *Phiddipus,* in Greek, means "one who spares horses." Huh.
- They jump. I mean, Really Jump.
- Spiders in Space. Yes, NASA sent an individual of this species into space. They called her: "Spidernaut." Search for a YouTube video on "Nefertiti the Spidernaut" Cool stuff!

Side profile of the very handsome Jumping Spider. Photo: Eric Dinger

Where to Find in the Klamath Network Parks:
Jumping Spiders occur worldwide, except for Greenland and Antarctica. Every park in the Klamath Network will likely contain multiple species of Jumping Spiders.

References and Further Reading:
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Phidippus. Wikipedia article on one of the most common Jumping Spider genera in North America.

Haggard, P. and J. Haggard. 2006. Insects of the Pacific Northwest. Timber Press. Portland, Oregon.

Post Script:
The spider in the photos was recently adopted by the network Aquatic Ecologist, Eric Dinger, as a free-ranging office pet. Sadly, moments after these photos were taken, she disappeared. Anyone with knowledge of her whereabouts should call Eric.