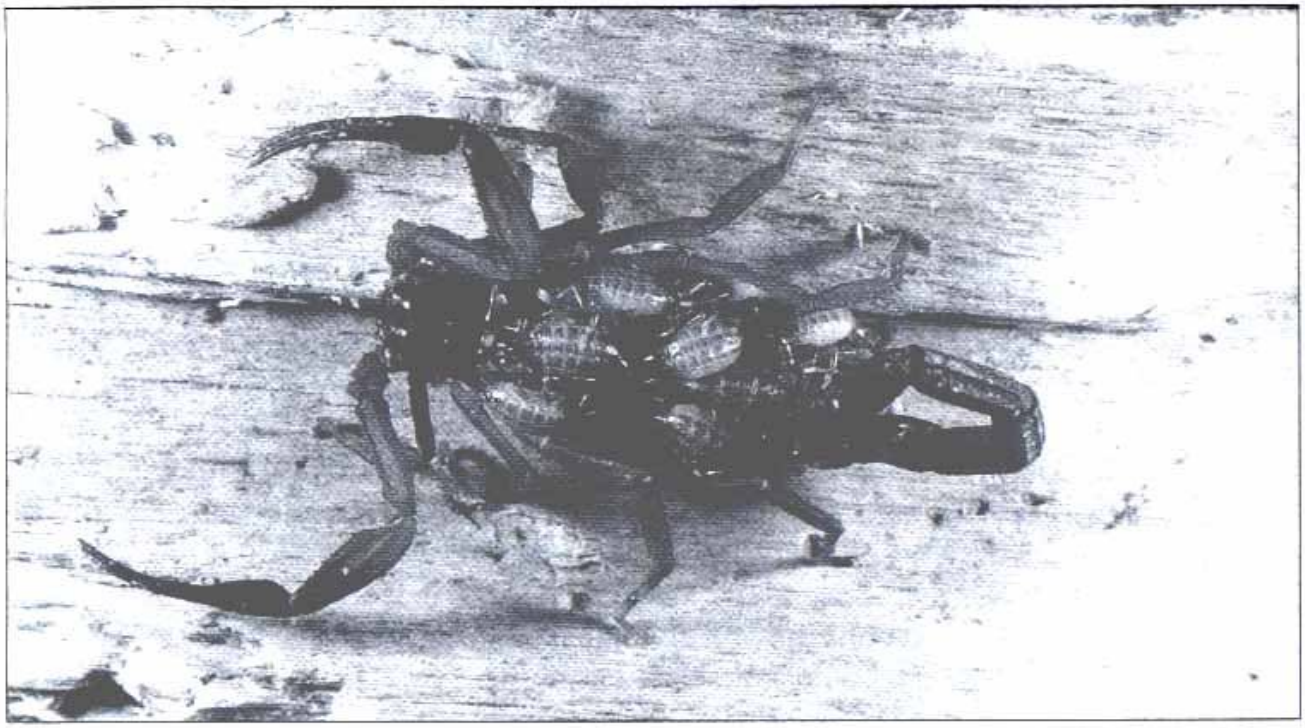
Rearing Of The Scorpion *Lychas scutilus*

František Kovařik

The genus *Lychas* comprises 37 species inhabiting southern, central and eastern Africa (*L. asper*, *L. burdoi*, *L. obsti*) and a vast region from India (*L. tricarinatus*, *L. scoplandi*) to Australia (*L. marmoreus*, *L. variatus*) (see references).

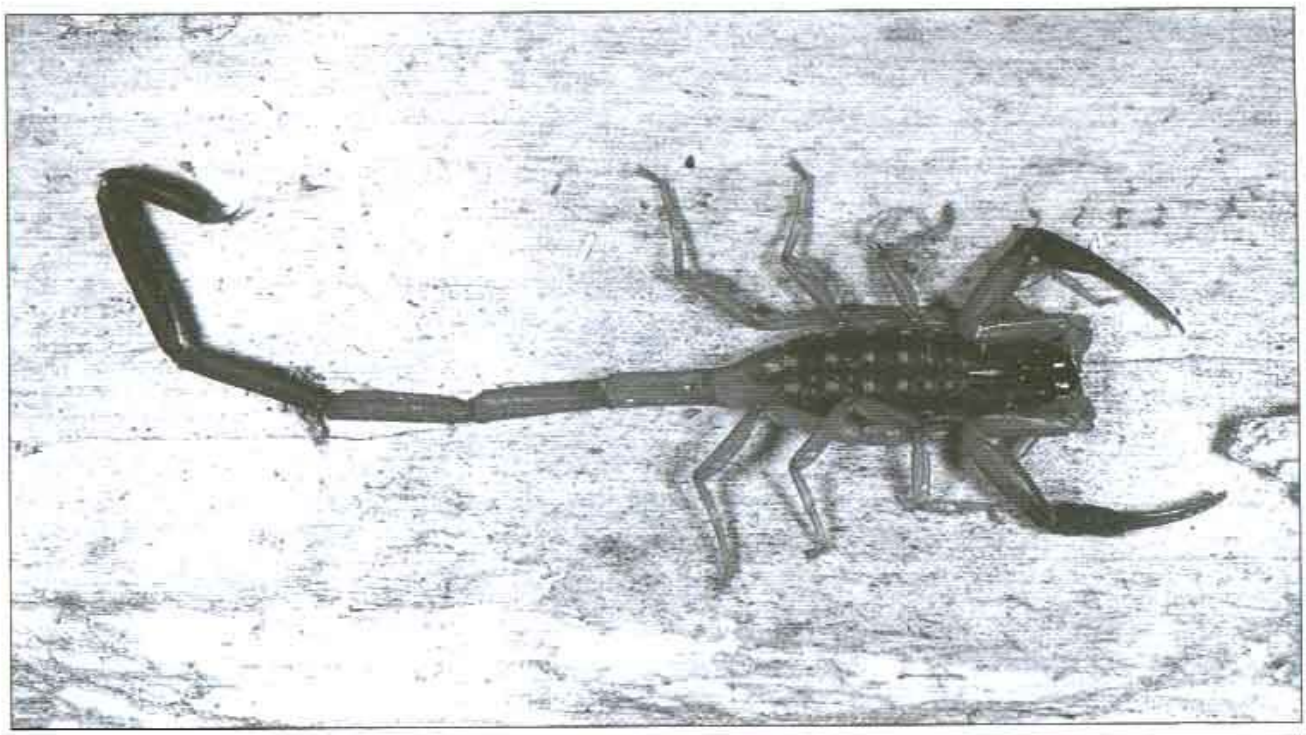


***Lychas scutilus* ♀ : Photo - František Kovařik**

Lychas scutilus is the type species of the genus and occurs in Myanmar, Thailand, Malaysia and Indonesia. The female is 45 – 56 mm long, whereas the male may reach as much as 90 mm. The species is not rare but also not as common as the two dominant Oriental scorpions, *Liocheles australasiae* (family Ischnuridae) and *Lychas mucronatus*. The two species of *Lychas* can be easily differentiated using sexual dimorphism. In *L. mucronatus* the metasoma (incorrectly called tail) is equally long in both sexes and the male has the grasping inner edges of the pincers warped so that the closed fixed and movable fingers do not meet everywhere along their length (as in *L. krali* from Thailand). In *L. scutilus*, on the other hand, the male has a much longer metasoma than the female (as in *L. shelfordi*) and the male pincers have straight grasping edges that meet without gaps. Combinations of these characters are present also in several other species of the genus, e. g. *L. asper*, *L. nigristernis* and *L. obsti*.

The optimal rearing container is cast glass, because putty or even glue in the corners provides enough friction to climb and escape. Especially young scorpions and the small cricket nymphae on which they feed are capable of climbing seemingly smooth surfaces. The lid of the container must have an area of fine mesh wire or cloth for ventilation. The

bottom is filled with a layer of peat moss or a similar substrate used for planting seedlings. The substrate ought to be sufficiently thick in order to assure good moisture retention. A few pieces of bark are necessary to provide dark hiding places. It is also good to include a small plant and to regularly spray it, as scorpions prefer drops of water on leaves to a water dish.



***Lychas scutilus* ♂ : Photo - František Kovařik**

In the wild scorpions prey on a variety of other invertebrates, but in captivity it is best to feed them primarily crickets of suitable size, from early-stage nymphs to imagoes.

After birth the larvae remain on their mother's back for about seven days, and so soon as they become independent they or the mother should be transferred into a separate container. I use containers approximately 9 x 12-18 x 10 (h) cm and keep them in a modified glass-front bookcase. Such an enclosure is not mandatory, but it further helps to prevent escape and makes temperature and humidity much easier to maintain. I do not recommend plastic containers frequently used for tarantulas, because their not quite vertical walls make climbing easier and the tight lid causes insufficient ventilation and consequently fast moulding of dead crickets as well as of substrate.

The larvae of *L. scutilus* undergo the first ecdysis on the back of their mother seven days after birth, attain real scorpion appearance, and within the next few days begin to leave. At first they stay underneath the mother or right next to her, dispersing when disturbed but returning back to her in a short while. This stage lasts less than a week, and as soon as the young begin to feed the mother is removed. The young are then split according to the timing of their next ecdysis, which depends primarily on the individual intensity of

feeding. Scorpions cannot feed immediately before and after ecdysis, and crickets may disturb, damage or even kills them during that time. However, between ecdyses the young feed virtually all the time and thus require a fresh supply of cricket nymphs every day.

Therefore, immediately after the second ecdysis the young are transferred to another container using soft tweezers to prevent damage. The brood is thus divided into two (or more) containers with different feeding regimes, and cleanliness and fresh substrate are assured after each ecdysis. This system also allows the kind of recording shown in the table.

I have reared only five young of *L. scutilus*, which underwent the second ecdysis 30 to 40 days after birth (a. b.). Unfortunately, three of them perished shortly afterwards. The remaining two young underwent the third ecdysis 68 and 74 days a. b., the fourth ecdysis 88 and 104 days a.b., and the fifth and last ecdysis 135 and 141 days a.b. They happened to be a pair, and since they remained together the female gave birth at the age of 261 days.

	Number of larvae	Time of ecdyses counted in days from date of birth						Number of ecdyses	Remarks
		first	second	third	fourth	fifth	sixth		
Family **Buthidae**									
Androctonus australis	30-60	5	66	140	293	331	404	6-8	only one specimen reared
Centruroides gracilis	16-38	9-12	33-40	56-65	81-113	133-183	210-300	5-7	fecundity 6 weeks to 8 months
C. limbatus	31-40	9	38-46	65-90	126-156	199-225	cca 400	4-6	fecundity 135 days
C. margaritatus	cca 40	12	46-60	92-135	176-252	196-400	550	5-7	sixth ecdysis at above 30°C at the age of ca. 300 days
Lychas mucronatus	28-36	4	35-60	58-94	84-127	113-168	-	5	females gave birth at the age of 203 – 400 days
L. scutilus	12-26	7	30-40	68-74	88-104	135-141	-	5-7	female gave birth at the age of 261 days
Rhopalurus junceus	18-40	12	20-30	36-75	75-131	109-200	220-271	5-7	seventh ecdysis at the age of 483 days
Tityus cambridgei	16-40	5	26-38	49-80	79-115	127-180	-	5	
Tityus tamayoi	14	6	20-35	45-75	99-190	-	-	4-5	perished at maturity after 520 – 550 days
Family **Chactidae**									only one specimen brought
Broteochactas delicatus	5	7	39-52	102-114	164-172	184	313	6	to maturity
B. orinocensis	9	8	30-40	60-70	107-125	227-377	532-740	6	
Brotheas gervaisii	8-26	7	35-45	80-120	180-230	240-300	-	5	
Family **Euscorpiidae**									only one specimen brought
Euscorpius carpathicus	8-30	9	59	90-130	165	205	-	5-6	to maturity
E. germanus	6-30	10	130	164	204	255	326	5-6	only one specimen reared
Family **Scorpionidae**									
Heterometrus indus	8-20	12-15	85-130	230-320	360-450	440-650	580-930	6	
H. laoticus	8-28	12	60-90	184-220	cca 320	cca 400	cca 650	6	
H. spinifer	8-25	14	75-96	161-212	294-365	405-490	cca 650	5-6	
Pandinus imperator	8-20	15	95-125	140-170	230-290	390-425	480-540	6-7	seventh ecdysis at the age of 700 days

The basic information on the development of scorpion species which I have reared from birth is summarized in the table. Data on the number of larvae produced and the total number of ecdyses are further correlated with and modified according to published information, but the length of development is intentionally left based on only my own observations in order to enable me to compare development of different groups of

species in similar conditions. All species have been reared at 24 - 30°C with occasional night–time drops to 20°C.

References

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