



Notes on the Spiders Records for Tower Hamlets Cemetery Park

The years vary quite a lot - in the wetter years traps get waterlogged and that will depress the pitfall catch, but total catch varies year to year anyway (2723 in 2014, to 6278 in 2009). The fluctuation is largely due to variation in numbers of just one or two species such as *Pachygnatha degeeri* and *Centromerus bicolor*. 2009 may have been the most abundant year but three other years 2010, 2011 and 2016 recorded more species. If you look down the numbers for the different species at least one has a maximum year in every year from 2007 to 2016, with the exception of years 2014 and 2016. This may mean that the conditions have a variable effect on different species: a wet year, or a dry year, or a cold spring or a cool summer will all have varying effects on different species.

I've marked the pioneer species with a red background, wolf spiders in green. The species listed are only those that have appeared in traps every year. The most significant single finding I think is the line in yellow. This shows clearly that the ratio of pioneers (disturbed ground species) to Lycosids (wolf spiders - grassland specialists) has changed during the course of the period 2007 to 2016 from 74.70% down to 4.03%. This suggests that the invertebrate communities are maturing and moving towards a fauna characteristic of mature grassland rather than characteristic of a typically disturbed urban habitat. In other words, current management is working well at least in the open, grassy habitats. Ideally that ratio should drop to almost zero for most sites.

Edward Milner, February 2017