



APHONOPELMA TARANTULA

Aphonopelma eutylenum

Aphonopelma xwalxwal

POPULATION STATUS

N Not Threatened

CONSERVATION

- This genus of tarantula is considered to be of Least Concern by the IUCN (International Union for the Conservation of Nature) in regard to population status. They are not protected in any part of their range and are not in need of a large-scale protection effort. In some areas of their range these animals are extremely popular to watch during breeding season when they are active in large numbers during the day.



SCIENTIFIC NAME

Aphonopelma eutylenum
Aphonopelma xwalxwal

OTHER NAMES

California ebony tarantula
Cahuilla ebony tarantula

RANGE

California, Oregon, Nevada, Arizona, and northwestern Mexico

HABITAT

Grasslands, grassy areas, forest edges, and chaparral

DESCRIPTION

A large tarantula spider with a light brown, bulbous body and darker brown to black legs that are banded in color.

AVERAGE SIZE

Length: 5 inches
Weight: 3 – 6 ounces

LIFESPAN

Females: Up to 25 years
Males: 8 – 12 years

DIET

Insects, other spiders, and arthropods

INCUBATION

40 to 60 days

CLUTCH SIZE

100 - 1000

PREDATORS

Wasps, birds, snakes, and lizards

BEHAVIOR

Like with most tarantulas, this genus is primarily nocturnal (active at night), terrestrial (spend their lives on the ground), and rarely leave their holes in the daylight hours. In fact, they are seldom seen by humans, except during mating season.

As hunter spiders, they do not spin a web to catch their prey in. Instead, they string a tiny amount of silk near the entrance of their burrow to detect prey moving by. When the appropriate sized prey triggers the silk strand, the tarantula leaves its burrow to make the kill. If larger prey or a human walk by and disturb the strand, the spider knows to burrow further into the hole and wait for the danger to pass.

As with most species of tarantula, this spider uses urtication. When threatened, they kick off the spiky hairs on their abdomen toward their assailant, hoping to render them temporarily blind.

REPRODUCTION AND BREEDING

Males become sexually mature at six to seven years of age. Mating season for this genus of spider is in the fall, around October and begins with the male leaving his burrow in search of females. This is a one-way trip for the male, as he will not eat until after the mating season when he will die. While it is true that females have been documented eating the male after mating, this is not the primary reason they do not live past their inaugural breeding season. The females lay eggs in the burrow and although she does not provide active parental care, the hatchlings remain nearby and get protection from her presence as they move underground to live their mostly solitary lives.

AMAZING FACTS

There are estimated to be over 50 species of tarantula in this genus.

This is a popular species in the pet trade as they are docile, and their bite is not harmful to humans.

Tarantulas molt their exoskeleton as they grow. They are extremely vulnerable for several days until the new exoskeleton hardens.

