

Wolf Spiders

Scientific Name: *Family Lycosidae*

Wolf spiders are abundant in many different environments in Montana from grasslands to forests.

They are hunting spiders, so they don't build webs to catch their prey. Rather, they ambush or stalk their prey. Some build silk-lined burrows while others find retreats under rocks, vegetation, and other debris.

Unlike most spiders, they have excellent vision that is used for prey capture. They also have a distinctive and diagnostic eye pattern.

The females have the unique behavior of attaching their egg sacs to their spinnerets and then allowing the hatched spiderlings to remain on their abdomens until they are ready to disperse and be independent (Fig. 1).

Life Cycle:

The life cycles of wolf spiders are highly variable with some species living for multiple years and others having only a one-year life cycle. Some wolf spiders will be active on warmer winter days while other species will have offspring overwintering in egg sacs.

They are harmless spiders; however, some wolf spiders, such as the Carolina wolf spider, can be quite large. They are beneficial predators in several different ecosystems.



Figure 1. Wolf spider with spiderlings on her abdomen. Photo by M. Kralich.