**Maratus** Karsch, 1878

**Taxonomy**

*Maratus* is an Australian genus with 70 described species. These can be divided into two groups: the peacock spiders, those whose males have moderately to spectacularly-coloured or shiny upper abdomens, ornamented larger third legs and sometimes modified spinnerets used in displays; and a second group of misplaced species which came into *Maratus* as part of the synonymised *Lycidas* and are yet to be revised out. As *Maratus* is a genus with considerable popular and scientific interest, new species are added frequently. A dubious Chinese species ‘*Lycidas furvus*’ is one of the species brought in with the synonymised *Lycidas*.

*Maratus* is part of a group of Australian genera (Maddison et al 2008) related to the Old World genus *Saitis* (Zhang and Maddison 2015). *Maratus* is closely related to *Barrainia*, *Hypoblemum*, *Jotus*, *Prostheclina* and *Saratus*. Further information on the genus and described species can be found in Otto and Hill, 2017, Richardson and Zabka (2017) and Whyte and Anderson (2017).

**Description**

*Maratus* is a small to medium-sized spider, body length 2 to 6 mm. Most males have a brightly-patterned, roughly-rectangular or ovate abdomen often with side flaps or other protuberances extended during mating dances. Females have ovate abdomens. The head, viewed from above, is rectangular with rounded sides or pear-shaped with the widest point behind the posterior lateral eyes. The carapace is high, the highest point level with the posterior lateral eyes. Chelicerae have a single (unident) sharp or blunt retromarginal tooth and two promarginal teeth. The legs are relatively short except for the long and often fringed third legs in males. The fourth leg is longest in the females.

In *Maratus* the palpal tibia has a single short, pointed retro-lateral tibial apophysis. The tegulum is long, with a well-developed proximal lobe. A thin, coiled embolus forms an anticlockwise circle in the distal third of the tegulum and is accompanied by an associated sclerite.

Females have two epigynal atria with sclerotised guides. The copulatory openings are near the centre (medial) or towards the lateral edges of the atria. There may be a variously-sized diverticulum or proximal receiver joining the insemination duct close to the opening. The insemination ducts then follow short winding paths before joining the anterior edge of round spermathecae, posterior to the atria, close to the epigastric fold.

**Biology**

This genus has been found in litter, under rocks, on grass and ferns, under bark and in foliage. It has been found in habitats ranging from desert, through tropical rainforest to cool temperate forest and snow gum woodlands. Members of the genus (in the strict sense) are well known as Peacock Spiders. The males have species-specific, brightly-coloured, abdomens which, with the third pair of legs, are in most species raised as part of complex courtship rituals, each species having a unique courtship display.

**Distribution**

*Maratus* is found throughout Australia, including Tasmania. It has also been reported from Lord Howe Island and Norfolk Island.

**References**


* The information sheet should be interpreted in the context of the associated diagrams and photographs. Diagrams explaining anatomical terms can be found in the ‘Salticidae’ pictures at the beginning of the list of genera.

**Peacock spiders**

- *Maratus albus*
- *Maratus amabilis*
- *Maratus anomalus*
- *Maratus australis*
- *Maratus avibus*
- *Maratus bubo*
- *Maratus caerulus*
- *Maratus calcitrans*
- *Maratus chrysomelas*
- *Maratus clupeatus*
- *Maratus digitatus*
- *Maratus elephans*
- *Maratus eliasi*
- *Maratus fimbriatus*
- *Maratus harrisi*
- *Maratus hortorum*
- *Maratus jacatus*
- *Maratus julianneae*
- *Maratus karrie*
- *Maratus kwirrkurra*
- *Maratus leo*
- *Maratus licunxini*
- *Maratus linnaei*
- *Maratus literatus*
- *Maratus lobatus*
- *Maratus madelinae*
- *Maratus michaelorum*
- *Maratus montanus*
- *Maratus mungaich*
- *Maratus nigromaculatus*
- *Maratus ottoi*
Maratus pardus
Maratus pavonis
Maratus plumosus
Maratus proszynski
Maratus purcellae
Maratus rainbow (or Maratus splendens)
Maratus robinsoni
Maratus sarahae
Maratus sceletus
Maratus speciosus
Maratus speculiferus
Maratus spicatus
Maratus tasmanicus
Maratus tessellatus
Maratus velutinus
Maratus vespertilio
Maratus volans
Maratus watagansi

Generic placement uncertain
Maratus anomaliformis
Maratus bitaeniatus
Maratus chlorophthalmus
Maratus dialeucus
Maratus griseus
Maratus heteropogon
Maratus karschi
Maratus kochi
Maratus michaelseni
Maratus minutus
Maratus nigriceps
Maratus obscurior
Maratus piliger
Maratus pilosus
Maratus scutulatus
Maratus vittatus