

THE SPIDER-MAN OF KWINANA

HARRY DE JONG

CITIZEN SCIENTIST





Cover Image: *Maratus pavonis*
(Peacock Jumping Spider).

Acknowledgements

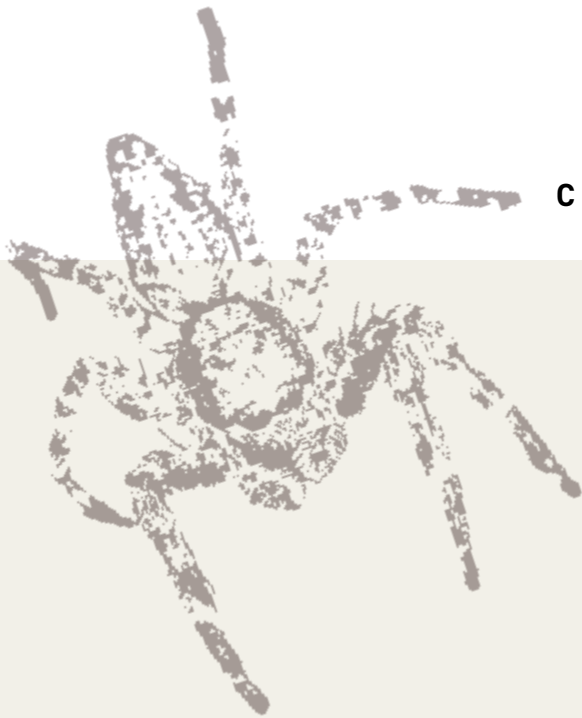
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BRIEF BIOGRAPHY



Right: Harry de Jong as a young man (1960)

HARRY DE JONG (1918-2009)

Aris Egbertus de Jong (known in Australia as Harry de Jong) was born in the Netherlands on 1 July 1918 towards the end of World War 1.

He spent his youth and early adult life in the Netherlands and trained to become a police officer.

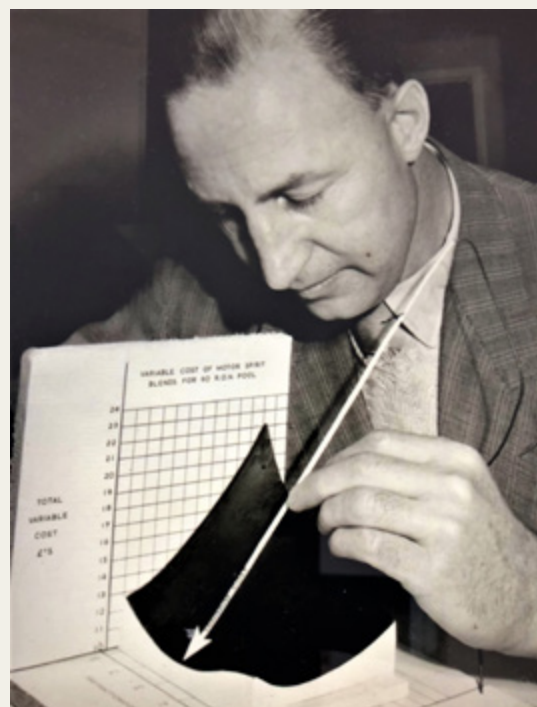
During World War 2 he continued to work as a police officer and was involved in the Dutch resistance to the Nazi occupation. He married Cornelia in 1944 and they had two children.

After WW2 he spent several years as a Dutch police officer in the Netherlands East Indies. Unfortunately, his wife Cornelia died from cholera while they were living there, and he was left to care for two young children.

He returned to the Netherlands in 1949 when Indonesia gained its independence, and his parents took over the care of his children.

He migrated to Australia in 1954 with his two young children and soon found work as a surveyor with the Public Works Department, working on the Wellington Dam project. During the years 1954 – 1960 he lived in Collie and met and married his second wife, Lorna in 1959. They had two sons.

At the end of the Wellington Dam project, Harry and his family, now seven, moved to the Kwinana area where Harry took up a job as surveyor and draftsman for the BP Oil Refinery. He continued to work there until his retirement in 1983. He lived nearby in the suburb of Parmelia.



Right: Harry de Jong at work at BP Refinery Kwinana (1965)

Harry had a lifelong interest in the natural world, and he spent much of his leisure time exploring the Australian bushland. He had a particular interest in jumping spiders and collected many specimens for the WA Museum. He discovered nine new species of spiders, and one new species of mite. Two of these are named after him. He was also an excellent photographer, and amassed a huge collection of 35mm slides of spiders and other wildlife that he found in the Parmelia area and on his travels in outback Australia. He had a particular talent for close-up photography of tiny arachnids and would sit patiently for hours, waiting until he managed to obtain a good pose from them. He enlarged his best photographs to reveal considerable detail of these tiny creatures, many of which were smaller than a grain of rice.

Harry was committed to wildlife conservation and was involved in many groups including the Entomological Society, Greenforce, the Leda Conservation Group, the Urban Bushland Council, the Kwinana Heritage Group and the Wetlands Conservation Society. He was a strong supporter of the Cockburn Wetlands Education Centre and became a foundation Board member in 1993. He was not a protestor or activist but instead promoted wildlife conservation through research and education.

Harry loved to share his knowledge of the natural world and he gave many presentations to school groups and the public about the local wildlife. He was also an avid adventurer and loved making unaccompanied trips to the outback. He took hundreds of photographs of his adventures and gave fascinating talks about remote places such as the Great Sandy Desert and the Canning Stock Route.

Amongst his many talents, were his skills at painting and photography and he completed many landscape scenes over his long life.

Harry's contribution to conservation and to the field of arachnology was recognized by the award of the Medal of the Order of Australia in 1999. The citation read "For service to conservation, to environmental education and to entomology".

Harry passed away at the age of 91 in 2009. His third wife Phyllis died in 2023.



Aris de Jong's contributions to conservation have been labelled invaluable.

Above: Harry de Jong OAM 1999

SPIDERS FIRST DISCOVERED BY HARRY DE JONG

Salticidae

- *Holoplatys meda* (1987, Meda Station)
- *Holoplatys windjanensis* (1987, Windjana Gorge)
- *Holoplatys dejongi* (1987, Parmelia)
- *Simaetha broomei* (1987, Broome)
- *Afraflacilla huntorum* (1987, Parmelia)
- *Ocrisiona parmeliae* (1986, Parmelia)

Hersiliidae

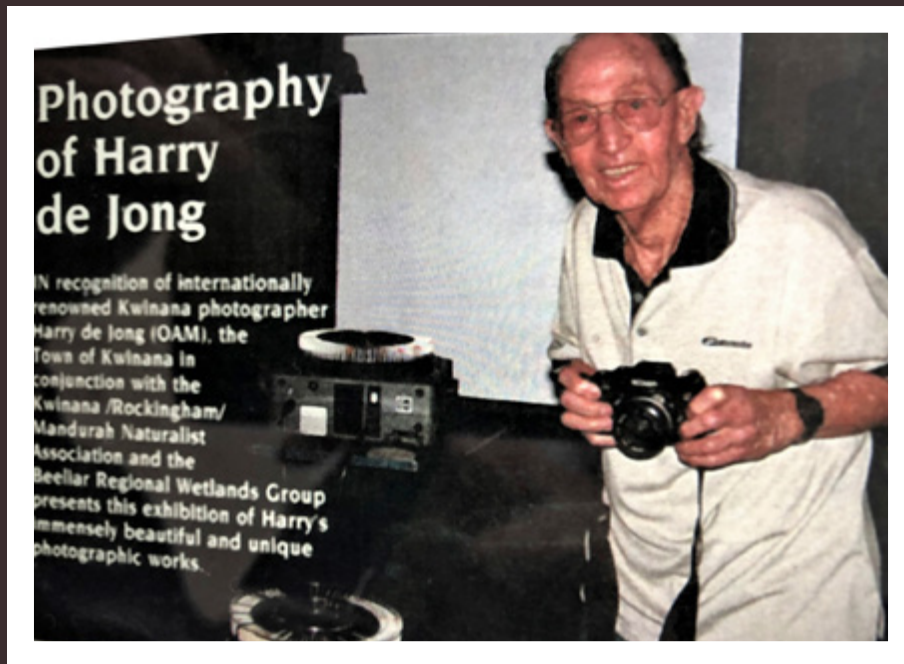
- *Tamopsis facialis* (1989, Callawa Station)
- *Tamopsis jongi* (1992, Rudall River)

Araneidae

- *Cyrtobill darwini* (1987, Derby)
- Plus, the mite, from the family Trombidiidae, *Dinothrombium southcotti* (1988)

(Details provided by Julianne Waldock, WA Museum)

HARRY SHARING HIS PASSION FOR THE NATURAL WORLD



Harry giving a presentation in 1998



Harry with Jeff Anderton and Mandy Grubb at an event in Kwinana in 2004

HARRY THE WILDLIFE PHOTOGRAPHER

Harry de Jong took over 10,000 photographs of wildlife in the Kwinana area and in the Australian outback. He loved to show these slides to children and interested adults with the aim of passing on his fascination with Australian flora and fauna and his love of the outback. He also collected numerous specimens of tiny jumping spiders which he donated to the WA Museum.

He hoped that by interesting and enthusing people with the wonders of nature they would come to appreciate and cherish it as he did.

This small selection of from Harry's slide collection on the next six pages will give you some idea of the scope his work as a citizen scientist.

Some examples of the types of jumping spiders (Salticidae) that he discovered are pictured below. The full list of his discoveries in arachnology is on page 5.



Top to bottom (L-R) *Holoplatys dejongi*, *Simaetha* sp., *Ocrisiona parmeliae*, *Holoplatys windjanensis*

JUMPING SPIDERS

(SALTICIDAE FAMILY)

Harry had a fascination with jumping spiders and he took thousands of photographs of them. These tiny spiders are normally less than 5mm in length. Harry was an expert at close up photography and these photos reveal the amazing complexity and colours of these tiny creatures. Jumping spiders can spring many times their body length to catch their prey, which is usually moths and flies. He discovered six new species of jumping spiders (Salticidae).



Top to bottom (L-R) *Helpis* sp., *Maratus pavonis*, *Pungalina waldockae*, *Opisthoncus* sp., *Maratus* sp., *Menemerus* sp.

These frogs are commonly seen and heard in the wetlands around Kwinana. Harry took hundreds of photos of frogs, and these are just a few examples from his collection.



Top to bottom (L-R) Motorbike frog (*Litoria moorei*), Banjo frog (*Limnodynastes dorsalis*), Slender green tree frog (*Litoria adelaidensis*), Moaning frog (*Heleioporus eyrei*), Marbled burrowing frog (*Heleioporus psammophilus*), Sandplain frog (*Crinia insignifera*)

INSECTS

Harry was a member of the Entomological Society and applied his skills to photographing the many insects that inhabited the woodland in Parmelia. Here are some examples. The close-up photography reveals artistry and details not visible to the naked eye.



Top to bottom (L-R) Cup Moth Caterpillar (Limacodidae), Mediterranean Fruit fly (*Ceratitis capitata*, Tephritidae), Shield Bug instar (*Poecilometis* sp., Pentatomidae), Seed Bug (*Melanerthyrus* sp., Lygaeidae), Crane fly (Tipulidae), Adult Shield Bug (*Poecilometis nigriventris*, Pentatomidae)

FUNGI

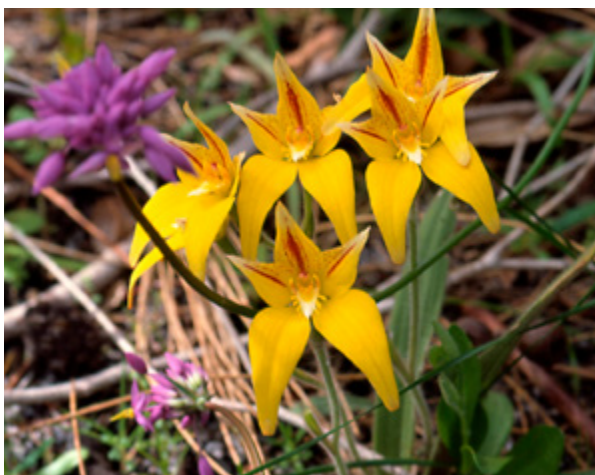
While wandering through the *Parmelia* bushland Harry photographed many species of fungi that he saw. Here are a few examples.



Top to bottom (L-R) *Leucocoprinus birnbaumii* (Yellow parasol); *Pycnoporus coccineus* (Scarlet bracket); *Chlorophyllum rachodes* (Shaggy parasol)

WILDFLOWERS

Harry's wildlife interests extended to the flora of the Kwinana bushland and the beautiful flowering plants it contains. Here are a few examples from his large collection of wildflower photographs.



Top to bottom (L-R) *Kunzea baxteri*, *Conostylis aculeata*, Donkey orchids (*Diuris* sp.), *Calactesia cyanea*, *Caladenia flava*, *Caladenia paludosa*

TREES

OF THE PARMELIA BUSHLAND AND PARKS

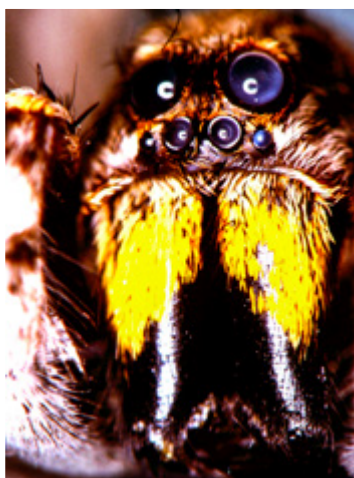
Harry also loved the native trees that dominated the Parmelia bushland and he photographed them too as they supplied food and habitat to the insects and spiders that fascinated him.



Top to bottom (L-R) *Banksia ilicifolia*, *Eucalyptus caesia*, *Xylomelum occidentale*, *Nuytsia floribunda*, *Acacia saligna*, *Banksia menziesii*

HARRY THE ARTIST

In addition to his talents as a wildlife photographer and naturalist, Harry de Jong was also an accomplished artist. He could paint landscapes and capture iconic images of wildlife with his camera. Here are a few examples of his art work.



Top to bottom (L-R) Canals Netherlands, White flower spider, street scene Netherlands, Lacewing, Jumping spider *Lycosa* sp. closeup, Banjo frog *Lymnodynastes dorsalis*

HARRY'S ADVENTURES IN THE OUTBACK

Harry loved to travel in outback Australia in his 4WD vehicle. He explored remote areas like the Canning Stock Route, the Birdsville Track and the Simpson Desert. On these expeditions he collected specimens of spiders and photographed the flora, fauna and landscapes. Here are a few examples taken from his extensive slide collection of his travels.



Top to bottom (L-R) Canning Stock Route 1987, Canning Stock Route 1992, Birdsville Track 1988, Simpson Desert 1988, Birdsville Track 1988, Goldfields 1991



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