64

Before moving on to a new topic, I want to finish up our unit on arachnids by looking at what may seem a very unusual aspect of spider behavior, a species where the young spiders actually consume the body of their mother.

在转到新的主题之前，我想结束我们在蛛形纲上的单元，通过着眼于一个看似非常不同寻常的蜘蛛行为的方面，年幼的蜘蛛实际上消耗他们母亲的身体的一个种群。

Unlike most other spiders, this species lays one, and only one, clutch of 40 eggs in her lifetime.

不像大多数其他蜘蛛，这个种类在她的一生中下一窝，而且只下一窝，40只卵。

The young spiders hatch in mid-spring or early summer, inside a nest of eucalyptus leaves.

年幼的蜘蛛在仲春或初夏，在一个桉树叶的窝里面。

Their mother spends the warm summer months bringing home large insects—often 10 times her weight—for meal.

它们的母亲消耗了几个月的温暖的夏季（时光）将大型的昆虫带回家——通常10倍于她的重量——当食物。

The catch is always significantly more than her young spiders can eat.

捕获物总是大大地多于她的年幼的蜘蛛（幼仔）所能吃掉的。

So, the mother fattens herself up on this extra prey and stores the nutrients in her extra unfertilized eggs.

因此，（蜘蛛）母亲用这些额外的猎物把自己养肥，并且把营养素储存在她另外的非受精卵中。

As the weather turns colder, there are fewer insect prey to hunt.

随着天气转冷，能捕猎的昆虫猎物很少了。

That's when the nutrients stored in those extra eggs begin to seep into the mother's bloodstream.

那就是当储存在这些另外的卵中的这些营养素开始渗入到母亲的血流中的时候。

So, when there are no more insects to feed to the young spiders, they attach themselves to the mother's leg joints and draw nourishment by sucking the nutrient-rich blood.

所以，当没有更多的昆虫来喂养年幼的蜘蛛时，它们把它们自己贴在母亲的腿关节上，通过吮吸营养丰富的血液来吸取营养。

After several weeks, the mother is depleted of all nutrients and she dies.

几周之后，母亲被耗尽所有的营养并死去。

But then how do the young get nourishment?

然而幼仔如何获取营养呢？

They start to feed on one another.

它们开始以彼此为食。

Now, if you recall our discussion of Darwin, you'll see the evolutionary value of this: Only the strongest spiders of the clutch will survive this "cannibalism," and the mother spider will have ensured that her genes have an increased chance of survival through future generations.

现在，如果你记得我们关于达尔文的讨论，你将看到这种进化的价值：只有窝里最强壮的蜘蛛将会在这种“嗜食同类”中生存，蜘蛛母亲将会确保她的基因凭借未来的后代增加生存的机会。