A genus of feather louse new to the Manx Shearwater *Puffinus p. puffinus*

J.A. Fowler and R.W. Furness

It has long been known that the Manx Shearwater *Puffinus p. puffinus* is host to three species of feather lice (Mallophaga): *Halipeurus diversus, Trabeculus aviator* and *Austromenopon paululum* (e.g. Fowler & Miller, 1984). When ectoparasite samples obtained by the method of Fowler & Cohen (1983) from 41 breeding and immature Manx Shearwaters were examined on Rhum, Western Isles, in July 1985, two birds yielded 3 adult females and 1 third instar nymph of a large louse we did not recognise. It was provisionally identified by R.L. Palma (National Museum of New Zealand) as *Naubates harrisoni*. An additional 20 birds deloused at the same site in July 1986 fortunately delivered a single confirmatory male which R.L. Palma has identified as *N. harrisoni* Bedford 1930 *sensu lato* (Mallophaga: Philopteridae). The louse, whose type host is *Puffinus gravis*, is widespread on several shearwater species, but the genus is apparently unreported from any subspecies of *P. puffinus* (R.L. Palma, *pers. comm.*).

Despite the low infestation level (3 birds in 61) it seems surprising that such a large louse should have gone unnoticed for so long. The question of how populations of lice existing at such low densities can maintain homogeneous gene pools intrigues us, especially when it is recalled how infrequently hosts, particularly immatures, encounter each other to provide an opportunity for louse interchange.

REFERENCES

FOWLER, J.A. and COHEN, S. 1983. A method for the quantitative collection of ectoparasites from birds. *Ringing and Migration* 4: 185-189.

FOWLER, J.A. and MILLER, C.J. 1984. Non-haematophagous ectoparasite populations on Procellariiform birds in Shetland, Scotland. *Seabird* 7: 23-30.

J.A. Fowler, School of Life Sciences, Leicester Polytechnic, Scraptoft, Leicester LE7 9SU.

R.W. Furness, Zoology Department, Glasgow University, Glasgow G12 8QQ.