

Bokmakerec Ocb 1957

NOTE ON THE WILDFOWL PARASITES IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

H. E. PATERSON

South African Institute for Medical Research, Johannesburg

(Prepared on behalf of the African Wildfowl Enquiry)

DURING the past 10 years the Department of Entomology of the South African Institute for Medical Research has been investigating the parasite fauna of birds and other vertebrates in Africa south of the Sahara. Of recent years we have had numerous collections of parasites of ducks and geese from Mr. Ernest Middlemiss of the Rondevlei Bird Sanctuary. Since our collections of parasites from some species of ducks and geese are more complete than those from others, it seems to me that it would be useful to present a summary of our knowledge of the arthropod parasites of this group of birds in southern Africa. This will, I hope, direct attention to the lacunae in our knowledge, and may encourage ornithologists to attempt to fill them.

The following table summarises the S.A.I.M.R. records and the original descriptions from the literature:—

PARASITES OF WILDFOWL IN SOUTHERN AFRICA			
Duck	Mallophages	Feather Mites	Nasal Mites
<i>Alopochen aegyptiaca</i>	<i>Holomenopon albofasciatum</i> Piaget <i>Acidoproctus taschenbergi</i> Hopkins <i>Anaticola asymmetricus</i> Rudow <i>Anatoecus</i> sp. <i>Trinoton</i> sp.	<i>Bdellorhynchus psalidurus</i> Trt. <i>Alloptes gynurus</i> Trt.	<i>Rhinonyssus rhinolethrum</i> Trt.
<i>Anas capensis</i>	<i>Anaticola crassicornis</i> Scop. <i>Anatoecus icterodes</i> ssp.	Not yet studied	Not yet studied
<i>Anas erythrorhyncha</i>	<i>Anatoecus icterodes</i> Nitzsch <i>Anatoecus dentatis</i> Scopoli <i>Anaticola crassicornis</i> Scopoli <i>Trinoton querquedulae</i> ssp. <i>Holomenopon</i> sp.	Not yet studied	<i>Rhinonyssus rhinolethrum</i> Trt.
<i>Anas punctata</i>	Not yet studied	<i>Freyana largifolia</i> (Mégn. & Trt.)	Not yet studied
<i>Anas sparsa</i>	Not yet studied	Not yet studied	<i>Rhinonyssus rhinolethrum</i> Trt.
<i>Anas undulata</i>	<i>Anatoecus icterodes</i> ssp. <i>Anaticola crassicornis</i> Scop. <i>Trinoton querquedulae</i> L.	Not yet studied	Not yet studied
<i>Dendrocygna viduata</i>	<i>Holomenopon dendrocygni</i> Car. <i>Acidoproctus rostratus</i> Rudow	Not yet studied	<i>Speleognathus womersleyi</i> Fain
<i>Netta erythrophthalma</i>	<i>Anaticola crassicornis</i> Scop. <i>Holomenopon</i> sp. <i>Trinoton querquedulae</i> L.	Not yet studied	Not yet studied

<i>Plectropterus gambensis</i>	<i>Holomenopon albofasciatum</i> Piaget <i>Acidoproctus taschenbergi</i> Hopkins <i>Anaticola asymmetricus</i> Rudow <i>Holomenopon tumidum</i> Piaget <i>Anatoecus</i> sp.	Not yet studied	<i>Rhinonyssus rhinolethrum</i> Trt.
<i>Sarkidiornis melanotos</i>	<i>Holomenopon albofasciatum</i> Piaget <i>Anaticola asymmetricus</i> Rudow <i>Anatoecus icterodes</i> ssp. <i>Trinoton</i> n.sp.	Not yet studied	<i>Speleognathus womersleyi</i> Fain <i>Rhinonyssus rhinolethrum</i> Trt.
<i>Spatula clypeata</i>	<i>Bdellorhynchus polymorphus</i> Trt.	Not yet studied	Not yet studied
<i>Spatula capensis</i>	Not yet studied	Not yet studied	Not yet studied

Some comments on the table may be helpful. It will be noticed that, in some cases, a specific or subspecific name is not given. In the case of specific names this means that either the specimens are in the hands of a specialist, or that no one is working on that particular genus, or that only females have been collected when males are required for specific identification. In the case of subspecies it usually means that longer series are needed so that populations can be studied by means of statistical methods.

The short lists of parasites from the less common hosts are a reflection of the amount of collecting that has been made from them.

Our knowledge of the feather mites is far less complete than is our knowledge of the chewing lice since they are more difficult to collect and because there are fewer workers studying them. These remarks apply even more forcefully to the nasal mites.

In conclusion I would like to invite ornithologists and workers of the African Wildfowl Enquiry who would like to collect bird parasites for the Department of Entomology of the South African Institute for Medical Research to write to Dr. F. Zumpt, P.O. Box 1038, Johannesburg, to obtain instructions as to how to proceed.

PILFERING BY VULTURES

While accompanying a group of photographers on the Magaliesberg near Skeerpoort on May 5, I made a rather unusual discovery of Cape vultures, *Gyps coprotheres*, pilfering nest material from their fellows.

On three occasions I noticed a vulture settle on a nest and seemingly manoeuvre itself into position to brood the egg. It then robbed the nest of some of its grassy material and flew off to deposit it in what was presumably its own nest. Though this behaviour is well known among certain species of social breeding habits, I doubt whether it has been recorded with vultures.

J. DE VILLIERS.

INFORMATION WANTED

I am collecting information on the predatory or piratical habits of all birds whether crows, shrikes, hawks, skuas, etc., and should be grateful for detail of any exceptional or remarkable cases which have been observed. I do not want anything relating to recognized or normal procedure. I hope to publish these records in book form later on. Full acknowledgment will be given to contributors.

COL. R. MEINERTZHAGEN.

17 Kensington Park Gardens,
London, W.11.