

PITRUFQUENIA COYBUS MARELLI (MALLOPHAGA, GYROPIDAE),  
AN ECTOPARASITE ON MYOCASTOR COYBUS MOL.

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*Pitrufoquia coybus* Marelli was first recorded from a Coypu farm at Pitrufoquen in the province of Concepcion, Chile. Marelli (1932, 1933) described two species, *P. coybus* and *P. mollis*, from Bahia Blanca and Santa Fé, in the Argentine; but Werneck (1936) on examination of a series from the same farm concluded that the differences found by Marelli were not sufficient to justify the erection of a second species. The present specimens (1 ♀, 1 nymph) were taken by Mr. E. A. Ellis, of Norwich, from a Coypu at Cringleford, Norfolk, on February 3rd, 1946. This animal was one of a wild population which is present along the river Yare and its tributaries in Norfolk. The details of this population, founded by escapes from fur farms and now well established, and its previous history, are being described by Laurie. It is perhaps remarkable that, although the Coypu has been bred for its fur for a long time and in many parts of the world other than South America, this species should have escaped notice until 1932, and be apparently unrecorded elsewhere than at three farms in South America. Important papers such as those of Maurice (1931) and Vereshchagin (1941) state definitely that the Coypu has no external parasites.

The Gyropidae are an entirely South American family, their hosts being rodents of the families Caviidae and Octodontidae. Two species *Gliricola porcelli* (L.) and *Gyropus ovalis* Nitzsch, are cosmopolitan as parasites of the domestic guinea pig, and are the only two which have been recorded in this country. The present species is easily distinguished from the former by its squat shape, *G. porcelli* being long and thin and *P. coybus* short and wide, and from the latter by the absence of tarsal claws and by having two joints to the maxillary palps, whereas *G. ovalis* has four.

The following brief description, modified from Werneck (1936), will serve to distinguish the genus and species:—

*Pitrufoquia* Marelli (1932)

Maxillary palps with two joints, last two joints of antennae distended to form a club. Thoracic segments distinct, legs without tarsal claws. Abdomen with five pairs of spiracles.

GENOTYPE: *P. coybus* Marelli, 1932 (monotypic).

♀. Length c. 2 mm. Yellowish white, with sclerotized parts only pale brown. Head wider than long, subtriangular; temporal lobes prominent; maxillary palps hardly projecting beyond front of head; a line of ten large bristles on the occiput with numerous smaller bristles between them; on the lower side two groups of five long bristles at the back and a transverse line of smaller bristles in the middle of the length; groups of medium-sized bristles on pre-antennal and temporal lobes. Thorax longer and narrower than the head; prothorax shield-shaped with numerous small spines and bristles and two lateral longer bristles; on the underside between the coxae of the first pair of legs a paired conical process extending backwards; mesothorax with four bristles on the hind edge set in groups of two; metathorax with a line of long and short bristles set alternately. Legs short and stout, all bearing distally a small oval plate with delicate honeycomb reticulation. Abdomen wide, lateral margins strongly undulated; first segment with a continuous row of long bristles on posterior dorsal edge; other segments with fewer bristles; sternites with numerous fine hairs but without bristles; segments 5+6 with well developed pleural plates.

♂. Slightly smaller than ♀; abdomen more pointed; pleural plates on segments 5+6 absent; otherwise as ♀.

The present specimens agree well with this description, except that they have only three or four long bristles in the groups on the lower side of the head, whereas the type has five. Dr. F. L. Werneck has very kindly examined the material in the collection of the Instituto Oswaldo Cruz, Rio de Janeiro, and writes that the number of these bristles varies from three to five, sometimes being different on the two sides of the head. Such variation is common in the Gyropidae and not of taxonomic significance.



