

ECOLOGICAL DIFFERENCES AMONG FOUR GENERA OF
PHTHIRAPTERA INFESTING SOUTH-EASTERN BRAZILIAN
HUMMING-BIRDS

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Thirty-four species of humming-birds have been investigated since 1989 in the widely deforested Atlantic Forest of Brasil, in a long-term banding project. Representatives of four genera of lice (Phthiraptera) have been collected: *Trochiliphagus*, *Trochiloecetes*, *Menacanthus* and *Myrsidea*.

The genera display well marked ecological differences such as: place of oviposition, resting location, feeding habitats, sedentary or fast-moving habits. These differences are reflected in their morphological characters, especially in *Trochiliphagus* and *Trochiloecetes*, the most common humming-bird lice. For instance, short and stocky legs in *Trochiloecetes* are linked with immobility. Six differences among *Trochiliphagus* of humming-birds of the same size remain unexplained. *Menacanthus* and *Myrsidea* share the habit of walking on the skin and not on feathers, and they also occur also in Passeriformes or other orders where they are larger in size. Some humming-birds have three lice genera, others one or two genera. Individual humming-birds were infested very often by *Ramphodon naevius* in Espirito Santo lack lice, but in Sao Paulo they were hosts to *Trochiloecetes*.