

SUGGESTIONS FOR COLLECTING EXTERNAL PARASITES
OF BIRDS

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Mallophaga, or biting lice, are commonly found on practically all species of wild birds. They are very small (generally from one twentieth to one fourth inch in length), flattened, and are found near the base of the feathers and on the skin of the host, especially on the head, neck, breast, and back and under the wings. They feed on parts of the feathers and dead particles of the skin.

In bird-banding work with a little patience it is possible to collect these parasites from trapped birds. By carefully parting the feathers the lice can be picked from the bird with small forceps or tweezers. Small curved-nose forceps are most convenient to use. The lice should be placed immediately in a small vial of 70 per cent alcohol for killing and preserving. In collecting birds they can be examined for lice either immediately after shooting or just before the bird is skinned. Mallophaga have a tendency to crawl from the host as the body cools; consequently it is always best to wrap the birds individually in several thicknesses of paper until time is available for examination. Birds should not be thrown together in a gamebag until they have been examined, as an interchange of host may occur. It is very important to have the exact and correct host record. It is much easier to collect lice from a freshly killed bird than from a live one which is continually squirming and trying to escape from the hand.

Place parasites from only one individual bird in each vial of preservative. The vial should then be labelled with the correct host-name, locality, date, and name of collector. Frequently several species of Mallophaga will be found on one bird. Care must be taken to examine each bird very thoroughly to be sure none are overlooked. It is also well to preserve some of the immature lice and eggs if any are observed.

This same method of collecting and preserving will apply to the other groups of parasites found among the feathers or on the skin of the bird. Mites, ticks, fleas, and bird flies (*Hippoboscidae*) may be found on many birds and should be collected and preserved in the same vial with the lice.

We are very anxious to secure parasites from birds from all parts of the United States and will gladly furnish small vials with 70 per cent alcohol to persons willing to cooperate in this work. I may be addressed at the Bureau of Entomology, Washington, D. C.

NOTICE TO COLLECTORS OF BIRD PARASITES

Word has been received that Harold S. Peters, who appealed to banders in the April *Bird-Banding* to collect parasites for the United States Bureau of Entomology and who renews his appeal in this issue, has left for the southern Bahama Islands to be absent about four months. He wishes banders to know that he cannot answer letters or determine specimens until his return in September. The Entomological Bureau, however, will handle any correspondence and send vials to those requesting them. It is hoped that a fine response by all banders will be made to his request for specimens.