

ECTOPARASITES COLLECTED FROM THE OVENBIRD (*Seiurus aurocapilla*) ON VACA KEY, FLORIDA

LAWRENCE J. HRIBAR

*Florida Keys Mosquito Control District, 503 107th Street,
Marathon, Florida 33050*

The quill mite, *Syringophiloidus seiurus* (Clark) (Prostigmata: Syringophilidae) and the louse fly *Ornithoctona fusciventris* (Wiedemann) (Diptera: Hippoboscidae) are among the very few records of ectoparasites from the Ovenbird, *Seiurus aurocapilla* from Florida (Forrester and Spaulding 2003). On the 17th of November 2011, an Ovenbird was found dead outside a building on Vaca Key in Marathon, Florida (24.729984, -81.039438), apparently having collided with a plate glass window. The bird was handled and feather mites recovered and prepared for study in the same manner as were the specimens examined by Hribar and Miller (2011).

Only twenty-five feather mites were recovered. Slide mounts were examined via phase contrast microscopy and then sent to a specialist for identification. Three mite species were recovered, two Proctophyllodidae (*Proctophyllodes* sp., *Amerodectes* sp.) and one Trouessartiidae. Unfortunately no specimens were readily identifiable to species. One female mite was identified as *Proctophyllodes* sp. Females of this genus are very difficult to identify to species, however, *Proctophyllodes breviquadriatus* Atyeo and Braasch is known from Ovenbirds (Atyeo and Braasch 1966). One male and three female *Amerodectes* were not identifiable to species and may represent an undescribed species. *Amerodectes* mites are found on a variety of birds in the New World, viz., Apodiformes: Apodidae; Passeriformes: Cardinalidae, Emberizidae, Furnariidae, Hirundinidae, Icteridae, Parulidae, Thraupidae, and Turdidae (Valim and Hernandez 2010). The two male and two female *Trouessartia* mites appear to be conspecific with mites found on Ovenbirds in Alberta, Canada, and also represent an undescribed species (H. Proctor, pers. comm.). Mites of the genus *Trouessartia* are found on passerines worldwide (Santana 1976). All mites were deposited into the Florida State Collection of Arthropods (E2012-5086).

One female louse fly (Diptera: Hippoboscidae) was recovered from the bird. The fly was tentatively identified as *Microlynchia furtiva* Bequaert. The specimen has been deposited into the Florida State Collection of Arthropods, Gainesville (E2012-5085). The only host record for this louse fly species is a Tinamou (*Crypturellus* sp.) in "British Honduras" (modern Belize) (Bequaert 1955, Maa 1969). Tinamous are ground-dwelling birds that feed on fruits, seeds, and insects, primarily ants (Lancaster 1964); Ovenbirds also are ground dwellers that feed on invertebrates, primarily ants (Kale and Maehr 1990, Brown and Sherry 2006). Ovenbirds overwinter in Belize, among other places, (Mills and Rogers 1992). The possibility exists that the louse fly may encounter Tinamous and Ovenbirds in the same habitat. Almost nothing is known of the biology of this fly; Couch (1963) studied the biology of a related species, the more commonly collected species *Microlynchia pusilla* (Speiser). *Microlynchia pusilla* has a broad host range, parasitizing birds in eight orders, ten families and nineteen genera (Maa 1969, McClure 1984, Tella et al. 2000). It is possible that *M. furtiva* has a similarly broad host range. *Microlynchia pusilla* also is believed to be a vector of *Haemoproteus columbae* Kruse, a blood parasite of pigeons and doves (Herman 1954). It is conceivable that *M. furtiva* may also serve as a vector of pathogens of birds.

Given the wide geographic distribution of the Ovenbird, from Canada to South America and the Caribbean (Tikasingh and French 1973, Bayne and Hobson 2002), and that it is subject to parasitism by Brown-headed Cowbirds, *Molothrus ater* (Hersek et al. 2002), it would be interesting to conduct a parasitological survey of the Ovenbird and its nests throughout its geographic range. Doubtless other interesting associations remain to be discovered.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I thank Heather Proctor, University of Alberta, for identifying the mites, and Carl Dick, Western Kentucky University, for identifying the louse fly. William Grogan, Florida State Collection of Arthropods, provided copies of important papers.

LITERATURE CITED

- ATYEO, W. T., AND N. L. BRAASCH. 1966. The feather mite genus *Proctophyllodes* (Sarcoptiformes, Proctophyllodidae). Bulletin of the University of Nebraska State Museum 5:1-354.
- BAYNE, E. M., AND K. A. HOBSON. 2002. Apparent survival of male Ovenbirds in fragmented and forested boreal landscapes. Ecology 85:1307-1316.
- BEQUAERT, J. 1955. The Hippoboscidae or louse flies (Diptera) of mammals and birds. Part II. Taxonomy. Entomologica Americana (n.s.) 35:233-416.
- BROWN, D. R., AND T. W. SHERRY. 2006. Food supply controls the body condition of a migrant bird wintering in the tropics. Oecologia 149:22-32.
- COUCH, A. B., JR. 1963. Notes on the biology of *Microlynychia pusilla* Speiser (sic), a louse fly of mourning doves. Journal of Parasitology 49:140-146.
- FORRESTER, D. J., AND M. G. SPALDING. 2003. Parasites and Diseases of Wild Birds in Florida. University Press of Florida, Gainesville.
- HERMAN, C. M. 1954. *Haemoproteus* infections in waterfowl. Proceedings of the Helminthological Society of Washington 21: 37-42.
- HERSEK, M. J., M. A. FRANKEL, J. A. CIGLIANO, AND F. A. WASSERMAN. 2002. Brown-Headed Cowbird parasitism of Ovenbirds in suburban forest fragments. Auk 119:240-243.
- HRIBAR, L. J., AND G. L. MILLER. 2011. Ectoparasites collected from the Common Yellowthroat (Aves: Passeriformes: Parulidae) on Vaca Key, Florida. Florida Field Naturalist 39:138-141.
- KALE, H. W. II, AND D. S. MAEHR. 1990. Florida's Birds: A Handbook and Reference. Pineapple Press, Sarasota.
- LANCASTER, D. A. 1964. Life history of the Boucard Tinamou in British Honduras Part I: Distribution and general behavior. Condor 66:165-181.
- MAA, T. C. 1969. A revised checklist and concise host index of Hippoboscidae (Diptera). Pacific Insects Monograph 20:261-299.
- MCCLURE, H. E. 1984. The occurrence of hippoboscid flies on some species of birds in southern California. Journal of Field Ornithology 55:230-240.
- MILLS, E. D., AND D. T. ROGERS, JR. 1992. Ratios of Neotropical migrant and Neotropical resident birds in winter in a citrus plantation in central Belize. Journal of Field Ornithology 63:109-116.
- SANTANA, F. J. 1976. A review of the genus *Trouessartia* (Analloidea: Alloptidae). Journal of Medical Entomology Supplement 1:1-128.
- TELLA, J. L., R. RODRÍGUEZ-ESTRELLA, AND G. BLANCO. 2000. Louse flies on birds of Baja California. Journal of Wildlife Diseases 36:154-156.
- TIKASINGH, E. S., AND R. FRENCH. 1973. First record of the Ovenbird in Trinidad, West Indies. Wilson Bulletin 85:86.

VALIM, M. P., AND F. A. HERNANDES. 2010. A systematic review of feather mites of the *Pterodectes* generic complex (Acari: Proctophyllodidae: Pterodectinae) with redescriptions of species described by Vladimírčerný. *Acarina* 18:3-35.