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INHOUD: F. G. A. M. SMIT, A new South American Ceratophid bird-flea (p. 65). — A. A. WIEBES-RIJKS, De Nederlandse meeldraad- en knopgallen van het genus *Andricus* Hartig (Hymenoptera, Cynipidae) (p. 68). — J. VAN DEN ASSEM, Queue here for mating: waarnemingen over het gedrag van ongepaarde *Melittobia* wijfjes ten opzichte van een mannelijke soortgenoot (p. 74). — Literatuur (p. 79: W. N. ELLIS, THEOWALD VAN LEEUWEN). — Korte mededeling (p. 80: Nieuwe aanwinsten voor de bibliotheek).

A new South American Ceratophyllid bird-flea

by

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ABSTRACT. — *Neornipsyllus* (type species: *Ceratophyllus cteniopus* Jordan & Rothschild, 1920), a new subgenus of *Dasypsyllus* Baker, 1905 (Ceratophyllidae), is erected here to include, amongst others, *D. (N.) plumosissimus*, a new species of bird-flea from Peru, described below.

Dasypsyllus Baker, 1905 - *Neornipsyllus* subgen. n.

Differing from the nominate subgenus and subgenus *Avesopsylla* Fox & Anduze, 1947, by the following combination of characters. First frontal row of at most five setae in dorsal half only, second row of three or four setae. Mesonotal collar with pseudosetae along entire length; lateral metanotal area squarish; metanotal collar well developed. Dorsal extension of sulcus of mid coxa present, interrupting the surface striation; mid and hind coxa broad; cuticular ridges on inner side of mid and hind femur not interrupted. Hind tibia with seven setae-bearing notches or, when not distinct, with a false comb of short and stout setae; the two apical plantar setae stout. Collar of terga with vertical parallel striation. Basal abdominal sternum without lateral setae. Acetabular process not distinct. Telomere without a ventro-posterior extension and with four or five stout setae, none of which is modified.

Parasites of terrestrial birds in the Nearctic and Neotropical Regions.

Type species: „*Ceratophyllus*” *cteniopus* Jordan & Rothschild, 1920. Here belong: *Dasypsyllus aemulus* Jordan, 1933; „*Ceratophyllus*” *araucanus* Jordan & Rothschild, 1920; *Dasypsyllus comatus* Jordan, 1933; „*Ceratophyllus*” *stejnegeri* Jordan, 1929, and the following hitherto undescribed species.

Dasypsyllus (Neornipsyllus) plumosissimus sp. nov. (Figs. 1-3)

Type material: ♂ Holotype (BMNH), near Cuzco, 13.32 S 71.57 W, Cuzco dept, Peru, from *Catamenia analis griseiventris* Chapman, 13.XII.1970, leg. S. E. Chapman (the species of host bird belongs to the Passeriform family Emberizidae, subfamily Emberizinae).

Diagnosis: The male is at once distinguishable from that of *D. comatus*, *D. cteniopus* and *D. stejneri* (the males of *D. aemulus* and *D. araucanus* still being unknown) - in fact from the males of nearly all other species of fleas - by the extraordinary development of the intersegmental membrane between sterna VIII and IX. In the related genus *Smitipsylla* (fleas of flying squirrels in the eastern Himalayas) this particular membrane is also large although it does not quite reach the size or obtain the filamentous exuberance of the one in this new *Dasypsyllus*. Female unknown.

Description: Head (Fig. 1). Frontal tubercle well developed. Eye large, dark. Genal lobe acute. First frontal row of three dorsal setae, second row of four setae, ocular row of three.



Figs. 1, 2. *Dasypsyllus plumosissimus* sp. nov., holotype: (1) preantennal part of head; (2) segments VIII en IX, and paramere.

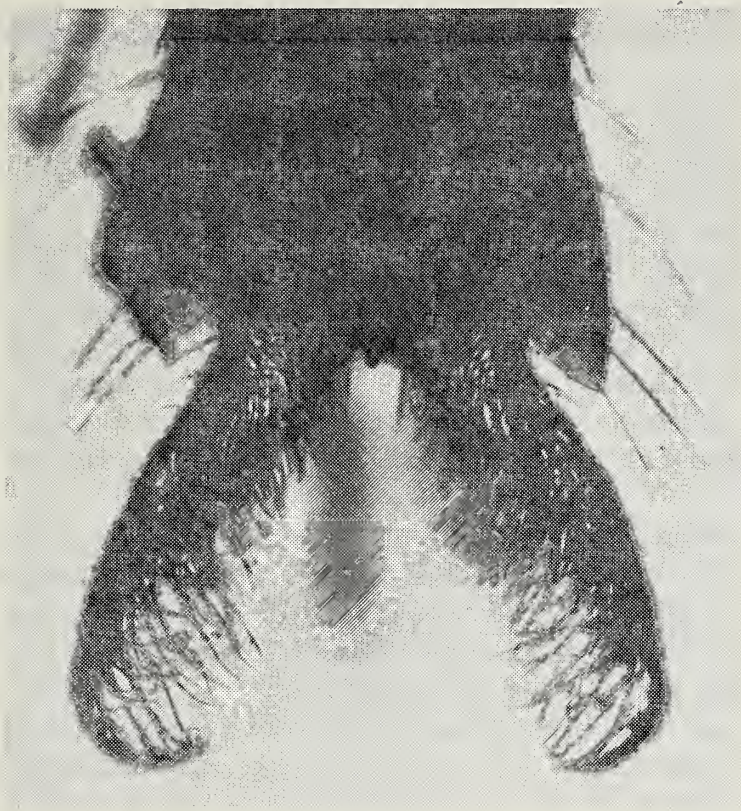


Fig. 3. *Dasypsyllus plumosissimus* sp. nov., holotype. Ventral view of apex of abdomen of specimen in alcohol.

Postocular seta present. First postantennal row of 2-3 setae, second of 5-6. Main row of 7-8 setae per side. Longest setae of antennal pedicellus reaching to a little beyond apex of clava. Proboscis reaching to 3/4th the length of the fore coxa.

Thorax. Pronotum with one row of 6-7 setae each side; pronotal ctenidium of 34 spines which dorsally are somewhat shorter than the pronotum. Mesonotum with a main row of 6-7 setae and 7-8 pseudosetae each side, the area anterior of the main row covered with numerous small setae; mesosternosome with 12 setae. Metanotum with a main row of 6 setae, preceded by a row of smaller ones; 1 or 2 marginal spinelets; lateral metanotal area with 3 or 4 setae; metepisternum with one seta, metepimeron with 7 or 8 setae. Pleural arch well developed.

Legs. Mesocoxal sulcus with a short interruption in upper part. On outer and inner side of hind femur a row of 4 or 5 setae. Anterior half of outer side of hind tibia without lateral setae. Longest seta of second hind tarsomere not quite reaching apex of third. Planta of distitarsomeres with minute setae over entire surface.

Abdomen. Numbers of setae per side in main rows of terga I-VII, ♂: 6, 8, 8-9, 8, 8, 8-9 and 7-8 respectively; the dorsal half of these rows preceded by a number of small setae. Numbers of marginal spinelets each side of terga I-VI, ♂: 2, 4-5, 3-4, 2-3, 2 and 1 respectively. Outer two antesensilial setae minute. Basal sternum with a striarium-like patch and one ventral seta each side. Sterna III-VI with two setae each side, sternum VII with one.

Genital segments. These are quite fully illustrated in Fig. 2. Especially noticeable are: the very long basimere; the strong apical seta of the processus basimeris; the unusual small setose lobe of apparently the pars anterior of the distal arm of sternum IX (rather obscured in the preparation); the strongly reduced asetose sternum VIII without vexillum and the paired hyperdeveloped filamentous intersegmental membrane lobe which on the outer side is covered with short thin spicules and on the inner side with very long filaments. These strongly protruding lobes were eye-catching when the specimen was in alcohol (Fig. 3). The aedeagus is partly obscured by the parameres but appears to be not too unlike that of related species. The ventrally divided anal sternum is somewhat longer than the tergum.

Length: ♂ 3 mm.