

SHORT NOTE

Miscellaneous notes on
South West African birds

by

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NAMAQUA SANDGROUSE*Pterocles namaqua*

During the period 1972 to 1976 the opportunity arose to examine 173 examples of *Pterocles namaqua* for ecto- and endo-parasites. This material consisted of four separate samples: Sample A: Consisted of 120 birds collected from inside the Namib Desert Park, South West Africa, throughout the year. Sample B: Consisted of 27 birds collected during the months of January, February, July, September and December from within the Namib Desert Park. All specimens were examined by parasitologists in the laboratories of the South African Institute for Medical Research (S.A.I.M.R.).

Sample C: Consisted of 20 birds from the Gaseb waterhole in the Etosha National Park, collected during August.

Sample D: This consisted of 6 birds collected at random in the Etosha National Park during April, May and June.

Feather lice were recovered from most Namib birds with *Syrrhaptoecus digonus* being found the dominant species. The closely related *S. brevifrons* was recovered on eight occasions only from birds secured during June into July. Adult females of both species of feather lice are illustrated in Figure 1 and 2.

The rare and little known *Neomenopon pteroclurus* was not recovered from Namaqua Sandgrouse while five examples of *Syphaeciella capensis* were obtained from a single adult female only. Most birds were however, found to harbour quill mites of the family Syringophilidae in the calamus of their primary feathers.

While most Etosha birds were found to be carrying *S. digonus*, *S. brevifrons* was not recovered at all. A few birds were found to be infected with quill mites and hippoboscid flies were recovered off two birds only.

Parasitic fauna so far recovered from Namaqua Sandgrouse populations in the Namib Desert Park and the Etosha National Park of South West Africa are given in the following list.

Namib Desert Park

Etosha National Park

Flies:

*Pseudolynchia canariensis**Icosta pilosa*

Lice:

*Syrrhaptoecus digonus**Syrrhaptoecus digonus**S. brevifrons*

Mites:

Picobia sp.*Picobia* sp.

Worms:

Syphaeciella capensis

No records

2 PARASITES OF THE
DOUBLE-BANDED
SANDGROUSE*Pterocles bicinctus*

During the periods January 1972 and November 1975 to May 1976 the opportunity to examine 22 examples of *Pterocles bicinctus* for ecto- and endo-parasites arose. This material consisted of three separate samples:

Sample A: Consisted of two birds from the Gaseb waterhole, inside the Namib Desert Park, obtained during January.
 Sample B: This consisted of 14 birds collected during December and May from the Okaukuejo and Ombika area of the Etosha National Park.
 Sample C: This consisted of 6 birds collected during November, April and May from near Rietfontein and the Ombika waterhole inside the Etosha National Park. All these specimens were examined by parasitologists in the laboratories of the S.A.I.M.R.

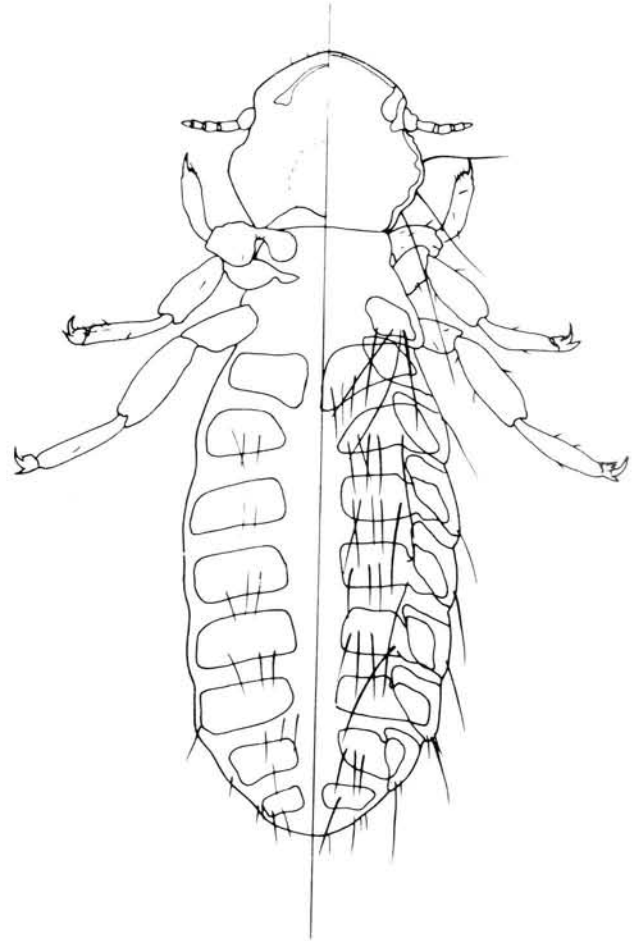
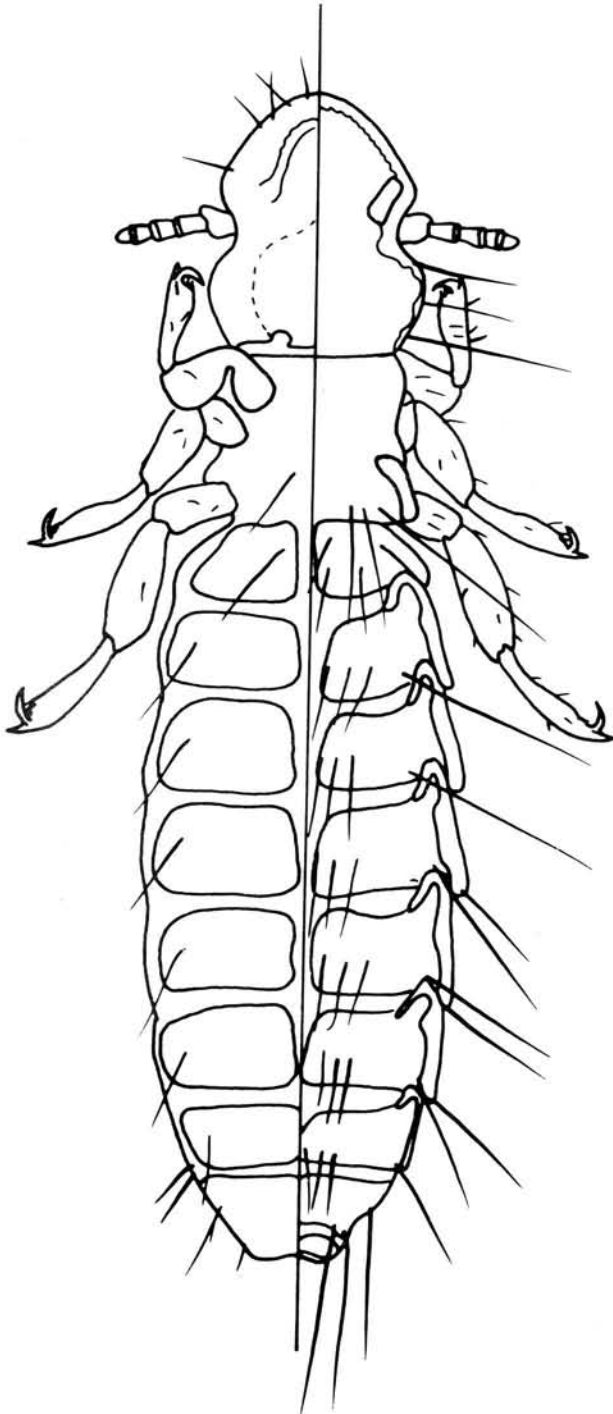


Fig. 2: Adult female of the louse *Syrrhaptoecus brevifrons*

No parasitic fauna was recovered from the two Namib Desert Park birds. W. Goussard (pers. comm.) has however, recorded "ticks" off birds netted at the Ganab waterhole, and J. A. Ledger (pers. comm.) records the feather louse *Syrrhaptoecus declivis* from this host in the Namib area.

It is of interest that in the Etosha National Park 15 % of the birds examined were found to harbour ticks, while hippoboscids flies were recovered from 28 % of these samples, as well. *S. declivis* was recovered from Etosha birds but mites of the family Syringophilidae were not recovered at all.

Parasites so far recovered from Double-banded Sandgrouse populations are listed hereunder.

Namib Desert Park		Etosha National Park
Ticks	Not identified (See text)	<i>Hyalomma marginatum rufipes</i> <i>Rhipicephalus</i> sp.
Flies	No records	<i>Icosta pilosa</i> <i>Pseudolynchia canariensis</i>
Lice	No records	<i>Syrrhaptoecus declivis</i>

Fig. 1: Adult female of the louse *Syrrhaptoecus digonus*

3 PARASITES OF THE SPOTTED SANDGROUSE

Pterocles burchelli

During 1976 the opportunity to examine 11 examples of *Pterocles burchelli* for ecto-parasites arose. Material consisted of two separate samples:

Sample A: Consisted of 3 birds from Ozonjuitji-Mbari in the Etosha National Park taken in June. This sample was examined by parasitologists in the laboratories of the S.A.I.M.R.

Sample B: Consisted of 8 birds from the Tobieroen waterhole in the Etosha National Park collected during the last week of July. Three of these birds were given detailed examinations in the laboratories of the S.A.I.M.R.

It is of interest that not a single parasite was recovered from Sample A. The 8 birds from Sample B proved more than interesting and the long sought after *Neomenopon* sp. was recovered off 3 of these birds.

Parasites so far recovered from the Spotted Sandgrouse are listed hereunder.

Etosha National Park

LICE *Syrrhaptoecus brevifrons*
Syrrhaptoecus sp.
Neomenopon sp.

4 ABERRANT VENTRAL PLUMAGE IN A JUVENILE NAMAQUA SANDGROUSE

During the collection of Namaqua Sandgrouse *Pterocles namaqua* material in the Namib Desert Park a juvenile female with aberrant ventral plumage was obtained. It is of some interest as it shows the partial morphological character of a male in having a band of auburn-tipped feathers across the thorax in the sternal-axillar region. In typical *P. namaqua* females lack any chest band at all. In this specimen some contour feathers of the ventral pterylya are tipped auburn to form a chest band between three and four millimetres in width.

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