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Confirmation of the identity of the type host of the louse *Halipeurus fallacis* (Phthiraptera: Philopteridae)

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Alexander (1954: 489) recorded a petrel (Aves: Procellariiformes) captured alive on board a ship in the Indian Ocean by Mr W.W.A. Phillips who, after removing some lice, liberated it the following morning. Alexander (1954) identified that petrel as the species “*Pterodroma aterrima* Bonaparte”, now placed in the genus *Pseudobulweria*. The lice were kept in the collection of the then British Museum (Natural History), now the Natural History Museum, London, England. Jouanin (1955) published a new species of petrel from the Indian Ocean as *Bulweria fallax*. Jouanin (1957: 19) discussed the identity of the petrel identified by Alexander (1954) as *Pterodroma aterrima*, stating that the descriptive data given by Alexander (1954) did not clearly fit either *P. aterrima* or *B. fallax*. However, considering the geographical coordinates where the bird was captured, Jouanin (1957) believed it was more likely *Bulweria fallax*.

Timmermann (1960: 328) described the lice collected by W.W.A. Phillips in 1953 (see details below) as the new species *Halipeurus fallacis*, designating its type host as *Bulweria fallax*. Palma (2011: 41) concluded that the original identification of the type host had been changed from *P. aterrima* to *B. fallax* at the NHML prior to Timmermann’s (1960) publication, but without a re-examination of the bird, owing to the fact that the bird was not preserved as a voucher specimen. However, the lack of additional *Halipeurus* specimens from either petrel species prevented the confirmation of the identity of the type host of *H. fallacis*. Therefore, Palma (2011: 41) wrote: “New louse collections from authenticated *B. fallax* and/or *Pt. aterrima* will be extremely useful to clarify that uncertainty”.

In June 2017, I examined five preserved specimens of *Bulweria fallax* held in the ornithology collection at the Natural History Museum in Tring, England, to search for lice. I collected three lice from two of the study skins. These lice were well embedded inside the layers of plumage as it took a good deal of ruffling and shaking to dislodge them. Therefore, I am confident that they were originally on the live birds when they were collected, and not the result of a contamination from another species of petrel during subsequent handling. I slide-mounted these lice following Palma (1978) and identified the three specimens as males of *Halipeurus fallacis* Timmermann, 1960, by comparing their diagnostic characters (head, genitalia and terminalia) against the holotype (see figs 11, 37, 61, 68 in Palma 2011).

These new records of *Halipeurus fallacis* from authenticated specimens of *Bulweria fallax* confirm that the name change of the host for the two lice collected in 1953—which became the types of *H. fallacis* in 1960—to *B. fallax* Jouanin, 1955 was correct. Also, these data confirm that Jouanin (1957) was correct in his opinion that the petrel recorded by Alexander (1954) as “*Pterodroma aterrima*” was not that species, but was actually *Bulweria fallax*.

A scenario where *Halipeurus fallacis* also parasitizes *Pseudobulweria aterrima* (Bonaparte, 1857) cannot be completely dismissed, as no *Halipeurus* has been recorded from this petrel yet. However, considering the high degree of host specificity shown by species of *Halipeurus* (see Price *et al.* 2003: 187) and that the two petrels in question belong to different genera, that scenario is extremely unlikely.

This result provides compelling clarification of the identity of the type host of *Halipeurus fallacis*, without resorting to the complications and difficulties needed to change the type host of a parasite (e.g., see Palma 2015).

Material examined:

NHML: Natural History Museum, London, England.

MONZ: Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, Wellington, New Zealand.

Halipeurus fallacis ex *Bulweria fallax*

Holotype ♂, allotype ♀, Indian Ocean, East of Sokotra, 12°04’N, 57°44’E, 6 August 1953, W.W.A. Phillips (NHML 1953-736).

One ♂, Arabian Sea, 15°34'N, 52°33'E, 14 August 1963, R.S. Bailey, *Discovery Expedition*, NHM Tring 1965.30.1 (MONZ).

Two ♂, same data as previous male but dated 18 August 1963, NHM Tring 1965.30.3 (NHML, MONZ).

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