
**INTRODUCTION**

Phthirapteran ectoparasites are oviparous insects. They glue their eggs to the feathers/ hairs of the host with a kind of cementing material secreted by the glands encorporated in their lateral oviducts. The hatched eggs remain permanently glued to the feathers/hair of host throughout lifetime. Since certain avian lice have tendency to lay their eggs in protected areas of host body (in order to escape the destruction from preening/grooming by the host) information about the egg laying site and the oviposition pattern of lice are necessary to facilitate the collection of eggs for recording their in vitro biology. Specific studies on the subject have rarely been made. Workers like, Foster (1969), Nelson and Murray (1971), Nelson (1972), Surman et al. (1998), Saxena et al. (2000), Tyagi et al., 2009, Kumar et al. (2003 and 2006), Gupta et al. (2004), Ahmad et al. (2010), Rajput et al. (2010), Aganwal et al. (2011), Saxena et al. (2012), Ahmad et al. (2016) and Rana et al. (2018) have commented on the sites of oviposition and egg laying patterns of phthirapteran ectoparasites infesting selected avian hosts. In the present study an attempt has been made to provide information on egg laying sites and oviposition patterns of an ischnoceran louse, *Goniocotes jirufti* infesting black partridges, *Francolinus francolinus*.

**MATERIALS AND METHODS**

Four infested birds (Black Teeter, *F.s francolinus*) were examined under Magnascope (six inches diameter lens, fitted with circular light) after tying the legs. The body of bird was arbitrarily divided into nine regions. The number of eggs of *G. jirufti* observed in each region was recorded in tabular manner. Total number of eggs found in each region was divided by the grand total of eggs to determine the percentage of eggs laid region wise (on the lines adopted by Kumar et al. 2006). Feathers bearing fresh eggs were examined under Stereozoom Trinocular Microscope to record the egg laying pattern. Few eggs were gently teased out of feather for Scanning Electron Microscopy. For Scanning Electron Microscopic studies, fresh eggs were fixed in a 2.5% Gluteraldehyde, passed in Phosphate buffer, critically coated and viewed under SEM (Mode Leo VPP 435).

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The egg of *G. jirufti* is ovoid in shape (Fig.1). Its opercular disc bear faint hexagonal marks but egg chorion is devoid of sculpturing or apophyses. The egg shell remains glued to the feather through its basal end (stigma) with the help of cementing material. *G. jirufti* exhibits wide spread oviposition sites on the host body. Maximum percentage of eggs were found on feathers belonging to back (50 %), followed by breast (36 %). Thus, above two regions carried 86 % of the total eggs. The percentage of eggs found on abdomen (6%), neck (4%), nape (2%), legs (1%) and tail (1%) was too...
The present report provides first information on the egg laying sites, oviposition pattern and the egg shell architecture of the egg of an ischnoceran louse *Goniocotes jirufti* infesting black teeter *Francolinus francolinus*.

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**REFERENCES**


