Short note

THE FEATHER MITES (ACARI; PTEROLICHIDAE) OF PSITTACINE BIRDS FROM MANUSELA NATIONAL PARK, SERAM ISLAND

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Psittacine or parrots are colorful birds with large heads, powerful, hooked beaks and strong flexible feet with two toes pointing backwards (MacKinnon 1988). They are popularly kept as pet animals because of their beautiful appearance or their ability to imitate human and other voices. Their daily contact with human being may probably transmit bird diseases such as virus and bacteria vectored by their parasites. A great deal diseases agents has been learned concerning ectoparasites of birds from many parts of the world, such as Southeast Asia (McClure *et.al*. undated) and in South America (Perez & Atyeo 1984) and Africa (Zump 1961).

A study on the ecology of psittacine birds was conducted in Manusela National Park, north of Seram Island, Indonesia. This opportunity was taken to study the diversity of feather mites living on their hosts in the wild. Four species of psittacine birds consisted of *Eos bornea, Eos semilarvata, Trichoglossus haematodus* and *Tanygnathus megalorynchos* were captured and samples of feathers were collected from the wing and the tail of the birds. They were put in plastic bags including their associated data and later brought to Bogor Zoological Museum for further mites collection. Mites were mounted in Berlese fluid examined and identified following Zumpt (1961 op cit).

The finding indicated all collected psittacine birds were infested with mites consisted of two families of feather mites and one family of free living one. Various feather mites of the family Pterolichidae and a still unknown family were found. Further scrutiny is needed to find out the exact specific identity of the samples. The free living one belongs to the family of Glycyphagidae, which accidentally infested the birds through contact during feeding or resting in their nest.

Most of the *Protolichus* sp. was found confined to the exposed ventral surfaces of the primary wing feathers in low density. Redford (1953) reported the occurrence of *Protolichus eurycnemis* on *Ara macao* (red and blue Macaw) and *Pyrrhura ferruginea* (emerald parakeet), *Protolichus megamurus* on *Poicephalus cryptoxanthus zanzibaricus* (brown headed parrot), *Protolichus chelidurus* on *Nannopsittaca panychloris* (roraima parakeet) and *Protolichus velifer* on *Platycercus elegans elegans* (broadtail) mostly all from South America. In Africa, Zumpt (1961 op cit.) noted the presence *Protolichus megamerus* on *Poicephalus cryptozanthus* and *Psittacus erithacus* (grey parrot) while in Mexico, South America, Perez and Atyeo (1984 op cit.) reported *Protolichus* sp. found on *Aratinga nana* (olive-throated conure).

Feather mites do not feed on blood hence their role as vector of infection is still not certain. With a heavy infestation or high abundance on the host they will certainly become a

nuisance. More exhaustive examination of birds from the wild as well those kept in captivity will reveal the diversity of feather mites fauna in Indonesia to contribute to a wider knowledge on acarine.

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