Gastrointestinal and external parasites of the white-crested elaenia *Elaenia albiceps chilensis* (Aves, Tyrannidae) in Chile

Parasitas gastrointestinais e externos de guaracava de crista branca *Elaenia albiceps chilensis* (Aves, Tyrannidae) de Chile

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Abstract

The objective of this study is to evaluate the ectoparasites and helminths of the white-crested elaenia, *Elaenia albiceps chilensis*. Feather mites *Anisophyllodes elaeniae*, *Trouessartia elaeniae*, and *Analges* sp. were detected in 51% of birds (n=106), whereas 24% were infected with lice (*Tyranniphilopterus delicatulus*, *Menacanthus* cfr. *distinctus*, and *Ricinus* cfr. *invadens*). Helminths *Viguiera* sp. and *Capillaria* sp. were found in five of the birds that were necropsied (n=20). With the exception of *A. elaeniae*, *T. elaeniae*, and *T. delicatulus*, all parasites represented new records found for the white-crested elaenia, and therefore for the Chilean repertoire of biodiversity.

Keywords: Birds, *Elaenia albiceps chilensis*, feather mites, Acarina, Phthiraptera, Nematoda.

Resumo

O objetivo deste estudo foi avaliar a fauna de ectoparasitas e helmintos do guaracava de crista branca *Elaenia albiceps chilensis*. Em 51% das aves (n=106), foram detectados os ácaros de pena *Anisophyllodes elaeniae*, *Trouessartia elaeniae* e *Analges* sp. enquanto 24% foram infectadas por piolhos (*Tyranniphilopterus delicatulus*, *Menacanthus* cfr. *distinctus*, e *Ricinus* cfr. *invadens*). Helmintos *Viguiera* sp. e *Capillaria* sp. foram encontrados em cinco aves que foram necropsiadas (n=20). Com exceção de *A. elaeniae*, *T. elaeniae* e *T. delicatulus*, todos os parasitas representam novos registros para o guaracava de crista branca e, portanto, para a diversidade da fauna parasitária do Chile.


Introduction

The knowledge of parasite–host associations provides vital information regarding the hosts, which should be taken into account in biodiversity and conservation initiatives (PÉREZ-PONCE DE LEON & GARCIA, 2001). The winter range of the white-crested elaenia *Elaenia albiceps* d’Orbigny and Lafresnaye, 1837 (Passeriformes: Tyrannidae) spans from southeastern Colombia to the Peruvian and Brazilian Amazonian regions, and is mainly represented by the subspecies *E. albiceps modesta* Tschudi, 1844 has been recorded near Arica (MARTÍNEZ & GONZÁLEZ, 2004), in the valleys and oases of the Tarapacá Region, Chile northern (ARAYA & MILLIE, 2000). In Chile, this bird is present from spring to fall, where it is known to reproduce throughout its entire geographic range (MARTÍNEZ & GONZÁLEZ, 2004; JARAMILLO, 2005). The subspecies *E. albiceps modesta* Tschudi, 1844 has been recorded near Arica (MARTÍNEZ & GONZÁLEZ, 2004), in the valleys and oases of the Tarapacá Region, Chile northern (ARAYA & MILLIE, 2000).

Currently, only three studies have examined parasites in *E. albiceps*. Kellogg & Mann (1912) described a louse *Physostomum fasciatus* var. *arctaus* from *Tyrannus vociferous* collected from Cerros Island in Baja California, which later transferred to *Ricinus* De...
Ectoparasites were found in 51% (n = 54) of the birds examined. A total of 227 mites were collected from 37 birds (34.9%), with 116 belonging to Trouessartia elenai (15.1%) – a recently described species by Mironov & González-Acuña (2013) (Acarina, Trouessartiidae) (Figures 2 and 3). The overall male to female ratio was 1.5 and the adult to juvenile ratio was 5.8. The mites were collected in Chillán, Santa Elena Lagoon, Huemules del Niblinto National Reserve, Los Peucos, Santa Juana, Santa Bárbara, La Mina, Altos de Lircay National Reserve, Parque Inglés, La Campana National Park, and El Yali National Reserve. One hundred and one specimens were identified as Anisophyllodes elenai Mironov and González-Acuña, 2009 (Acarina, Proctophyllodidae) (21.4%) (Figures 4 and 5). The overall male to female ratio was 0.33 and the adult to juvenile ratio was 10.2, they were collected in Bosques Fray Jorge National Park, Chillán, Santa Elena Lagoon, Huemules del Niblinto National Reserve, Los Peucos, Santa Juana, Santa Bárbara, La Mina, Altos de Lircay National Reserve, Parque Inglés, La Campana National Park, and Lago Peñuelas National Reserve. The remaining ten specimens belonged to the genus Analges Nitzsch, 1818 (3.3%), and they possibly represented a new species. These mites were found in the breast and rump of three birds collected in Santa Elena Lagoon, La Mina, and La Campana National Park.

Mites of the family Trouessartiidae are known to parasitize birds belonging to the orders Caprimulgiformes, Coraciiformes, Cuculiformes, Piciformes and Passeriformes (PROCTOR, 2003; HERNANDES, 2014). The genus Trouessartia Canestrini, 1899 is the most species-rich one in the family, and there are currently over 100 species that have been counted, which have been collected from bird species belonging to 28 families of Passeriformes (GAUD & ATYEYO, 1996; MIRONOV & GONZÁLEZ-ACUÑA, 2013). Five species, including T. elenai, have been recorded so far from birds of the family Tyrannidae (SANTANA, 1976; HERNANDES, 2014).

The family Proctophyllodidae includes mites that predominately parasitize Passeriformes and hummingbirds, with a few species belonging to other orders (SANTANA, 1976; HERNANDES, 2014). The genus Trouessartia Canestrini, 1899 is the most species-rich one in the family, and there are currently over 100 species that have been counted, which have been collected from bird species belonging to 28 families of Passeriformes (GAUD & ATYEYO, 1996; MIRONOV & GONZÁLEZ-ACUÑA, 2013). Five species, including T. elenai, have been recorded so far from birds of the family Tyrannidae (SANTANA, 1976; HERNANDES, 2014).
Figure 1. Map of Chile showing the sampling locations.

Figure 2. Trouessartia elaeniae: Male (A). Dorsal view.

Figure 3. Trouessartia elaeniae: Female. Dorsal view.
recorded from birds of the orders Gruiformes, Charadriiformes, and Psittaciformes (GAUD & ATYEO, 1996; PROCTOR, 2003). Relatively little is known regarding the diversity of proctophyllodid mites found on South American Passeriformes (HERNANDES et al., 2007; VALIM & HERNANDES, 2010; MIRONOV & GONZÁLEZ-ACUÑA, 2011). Three other known species of the genus *Anisophyllodes* Atyeo, 1967 are also associated with birds of the family Tyrannidae: *A. pipromorphae* has been reported from *Mionectes oleagineus* (Tyrannidae); *A. intermedius* on *Elaenia martinica* Linnaeus, 1766 and *Elaenia flavogaster* (Tyrannidae) (ČERNÝ & LUKOSCHUS, 1975); *A. candango* on *Elaenia chiriquensis* Lawrence, 1865 from Brazil (HERNANDES et al., 2007) and *Anisophyllodes* sp. on *Elaenia chiriquensis* and *Mionectes rufiventris* Cabanis, 1846 (Tyrannidae) (KANEGAE et al., 2008).

The feather mites of the genus *Analges*, as is the case for all representatives of the family Analgidae, live exclusively on passerines and are mainly located in the hosts’ downy and body covert feathers. Given their location in the plumage of hosts, analgids are a quite difficult group of feather mites to collect from live birds, and even from museum skins. The genus *Analges* is also the most abundant genus of the family, and it currently includes over 50 species, most of which are known from passerines of the Old World. To date, only one species, *Analges tyranni* Tyrrell, 1882, was recorded on a tyrannid host, *Tyrannus tyrannus* Linnaeus, 1758 in Canada.

Three species of lice totaling 78 specimens were found on 25 birds (24%). These included 65 specimens of *Tyrannophilopterus delicatulus* Mey, 2004 (Ischnocera: Philopteridae) (Figure 6), which

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**Figure 4.** *Anisophyllodes elaeniae*: Female.

**Figure 5.** *Anisophyllodes elaeniae*: Male.

**Figure 6.** *Tyrannophilopterus delicatulus*: Male. Drawing by Armando Cicchino.
were commonly found on the head and upper neck of 15 birds in Chillán, Altos de Lircay National Reserve, Parque Inglés, and La Campana National Park. Moreover, seven specimens (all nymphs) of *Menacanthus* *cfr.* *distinctus* Neumann, 1912 (Amblycera: Menoponidae) (Figure 7) were found on five white-crested elaenia birds from Chillán, Santa Bárbara, Sierras de Bellavista, and Altos de Lircay National Reserve. Finally, four specimens of *Ricinus* sp. (Figure 8) were found on three birds collected in Chillán and Valle de Azapa.

Lice of the genus *Tyranniphilopterus* Mey, 2004 are represented by 14 species, half of which are known as parasites of birds belonging to the family Tyrannidae (CICCHINO, 2007). These lice inhabit and lay their eggs in the plumage of the head of their passeriform hosts, which belong to the families Pipridae, Cotingidae, Tyrannidae, and Platysteiridae (MEY, 2004).

*Menacanthus* Neumann, 1912 is a cosmopolitan genus, which is known to parasitize birds in the orders Passeriformes, Galliformes, Piciformes, Tinamiformes, Coraciiformes, and Cuculiformes (PRICE et al., 2003). *Menacanthus distinctus* has been described as parasitizing the following species of Tyrannidae: *Myiarchus tyrannulus* Müller, 1776; *M. cinerascens* Lawrence, 1851; *M. ferox* Gmelin, 1789; *M. tuberculifer* d’Orbigny and Lafresnaye, 1837; *Rhytipterna simplex* Lichtenstein, 1823; *Contopus borealis* Swainson, 1832; and *Lathrotriccus euleri* Cabanis, 1868 (PRICE et al., 2003). The specimens obtained were nymphs of the first (N I) and second instars (N II), and they were tentatively attributed to this species (here noted as *M. cfr. distinctus*) by direct comparison with the N II available from numerous males, females, and nymphs of *M. distinctus* from *L. euleri* collected in Buenos Aires Province, Argentina.

The genus *Ricinus* De Geer, 1778 is composed of 72 species that are characterized by a relatively large size (3.1–5.3 mm), and which feed on blood, although some of them may complement their diet with feathers. They infest avian hosts belonging to at least 30 Passeriforme families (CICCHINO & CASTRO, 1998).

The two heavily pigmented *Ricinus* female specimens collected from *E. albiceps chilensis* belong to the *invadens* species group *sensu* Nelson, 1972, but details of their pigmentation, cephalic chaetotaxy, and dimensions do not fit well with those typical of the only species included in this group, *Ricinus invadens* Kellogg, 1899 (NELSON, 1972). This species, primarily described as a member of the family Pipridae, has been collected from birds of at least three genera in this family, and also from one member of the family Tyrannidae, *Anairetes parulus* (Kittlitz, 1830) (PRICE et al., 2003).

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**Figure 7.** *Menacanthus distinctus*: second nymphal instar (N II) male. Magnification 100×.

**Figure 8.** *Ricinus cfr. invadens*: Female. Magnification 100×.
2003). Another well-pigmented species belonging to another very different species group, *Ricinurus arcuatus* (KELLOGG & MANN, 1912), which is widely distributed on several tyrannid hosts, has also been recorded on this same host (PRICE et al., 2003). A larger number of specimens, including males, is required for the proper identification of the taxa recorded here.

**Endoparasites**

Of the 20 *E. albiceps chilensis* necropsied, five harbored a total of 14 nematodes. Thirteen of these (93%) were identified as *Viguiera* sp. Seurat, 1913 (Nematoda: Habronematidae) and were found in the small intestine of the white-crested elaenia from Chillán. The specimens were not identified due to the lack of sufficient material. All individuals were adults (eight males, five females), with a male to female ratio of 1.6. No females were found in the small intestine of the white-crested elaenia. With the exception of *A. elaeniae, T. elaeniae*, and *T. delicatulus*, all of the parasites reported here represent new parasitological records for *E. albiceps chilensis* and for the Chilean repertoire of biodiversity.

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