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BRIEF COMMUNICATION

REIGHARDIA STERNAE, A PENTASTOMID
FROM A SLATY-BACKED GULL IN
HOKKAIDO, JAPAN

Hong-Kean Ooi and Masashi Ohbayashi
(Received for publication, July 6, 1982)

Only two pentastomid species which infect birds as their definitive host have been recorded: Reighardia sternae (DIESING, 1864) WARD, 1899 and Reighardia lomviae DYCK, 1975. The latter was reported from guillemot Uria aalge in Northern Europe (DYCK, 1975), whereas R. sternae has been found in gulls, terns and alcids in various localities of Europe, Russia, China, North America and Brazil. Hitherto, no pentastomids from birds have ever been reported in Japan.

A sub-adult (about 2 years old) slaty-backed gull, Larus schistisagus STEJNEGER, caught in Zenibako, Hokkaido, in February 1982, was found to harbour 8 large worm-like parasites in the thoracic cavity and the lungs. In addition, a small, mobile specimen was recovered from the abdominal cavity. Showing a cylindrical body without annulation and 2 pairs of small hooks each surrounded by inconspicuous parapodial lobes, the large specimens were identified as the adult female of Reighardia sternae and the small specimen as the male parasite. The length of the female specimens was 51.6-71.1 mm, and the male specimen measured 5.7 mm. All the female specimens were gravid. The specimens were in agreement with the description of the adults of R. sternae by HEYMONS & VITZTHUM (1936) and RILEY (1973) and also with the description of the embryo by OSCHE (1963).

BAKKE (1972) reviewed the literature on the occurrence of R. sternae and made a list of the following hosts: Larus argentatus, L. canus, L. dominicanus, L. hyperboreus, L. philadelphica, L. ridibundus, Pagophila eburnea, Sterna hirundo, S. paradisaea, Rissa tridactyla, Hydroprogne tschegrava, Chlidonias hybrida and C. leucopterus. To this list can be added Sterna fluvatilis (FAUST, 1927), S. macrura (HEYMONS & VITZTHUM, 1963), Uria aalge and Fratercula artica (THRELFALL, 1971), Larus fuscus (RILEY, 1970), L. atricilla and L. delewarensis (PENCE, 1973). Thus the present finding of R. sternae in L. schistisagus presents a new host record for this parasite. This is also the first record of a pentastomid from birds in Japan.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We wish to thank Prof. Hisashi Abe of the Faculty of Agriculture, Hokkaido University, for his advice on the identification of the gull.

REFERENCES

EXPLANATION OF PLATE

Figs. 1-3 *Reighardia sternae*

Fig. 1 Male on the left, female on the right. Note the black hematin in the intestine. A: Anterior end, P: Posterior end

Fig. 2 Embryo. BC: Blastoderm cuticle, IN: Intestine, PD: Pore of dorsal organ

Fig. 3 Cross section of the integument of mature female. Note the presence of columnar integumentary bodies. IB: Integumentary bodies PAS-Haematoxylin stained