CONTRIBUTION TO THE KNOWLEDGE OF LOUSE FLIES OF CROATIA (DIPTERA: HIPPOBOSCIDAE)

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Faunistic research into louse flies (Hippoboscidae) in Croatia during the last two decades has increased the total number of louse flies known from this country to 11 species, of which Ornithoica turdi, Ornithophila metallica, Ornithomya avicularia, Ornithomya biloba, Ornithomya chloropus, Ornithomya fringillina, Crataerina melbae, Stenepteryx hirundinis and Icosta minor are new to Croatia.

Key words: louse flies, Hippoboscidae, faunistics, Croatia

INTRODUCTION

Louse flies (Hippoboscidae) are bloodsucking obligate ectoparasites of birds and mammals. Reproduction is by adenotrophic viviparity. Larvae develop in the female in a broadening of the oviduct, and the accessory glands produce a nutritional
secretion. The mature larvae (third instar) are usually deposited away from the host and they quickly transform into puparia. The exception is the monotypic genus *Melophagus*, where larvae are deposited and pupate in the host’s fur. Host specificity is generally moderately high and varies with different environmental factors and between different species of flies. Some species are often found parasitic on several kinds of unrelated birds that occupy the same habitats (Soós & Húrka, 1986; Grunin, 1988; Lehane, 1991; Lane & Crosskey, 1993; Maa, 1996).

The hippoboscid fauna of Croatia is poorly known. There are published relevant records for only two species (Langhoff, 1928). The present paper provides new faunistic data, which significantly expand the knowledge about the fauna of louse flies in this part of Europe.

**MATERIAL AND METHODS**

Most of the material was collected in the last two decades. No field trips were made particularly for the collecting of louse flies. Specimens were hand picked or netted on livestock and plants, or hand picked from bird hosts during bird ringing fieldwork. On one occasion they were collected from a bird’s nest. Collected louse flies were stored in the field in 70 % alcohol, separately with respect to host individual, survey site, and date. All the material without a citation is kept in the Slovenian Museum of Natural History (PMSL Hippoboscidae Collection). Some specimens are also deposited in the insect collections of the Faculty of Philosophy in Osijek (FPO).


**List of the hosts**

- *Accipiter gentilis* (Linnaeus, 1758), Northern Goshawk
- *Apus melba* (Linnaeus, 1758), Alpine Swift
- *Dendrocopos major* (Linnaeus, 1758), Great Spotted Woodpecker
- *Hirundo rustica* Linnaeus, 1758, Barn Swallow
- *Delichon urbica* (Linnaeus, 1758), House Martin
- *Motacilla flava* Linnaeus, 1758, Yellow Wagtail
- *Troglodytes troglodytes* (Linnaeus, 1758), Wren
- *Prunella modularis* (Linnaeus, 1758), Dunnock
- *Erithacus rubecula* (Linnaeus, 1758), Robin
- *Turdus merula* Linnaeus, 1758, Blackbird
- *Locustella fluviatilis* (Wolf, 1810), River Warbler
- *Locustella luscinioidea* (Savi, 1824), Savi’s Warbler
Acrocephalus arundinaceus (Linnaeus, 1758), Great Reed Warbler  
*Sylvia borin* (Booddaert, 1783), Garden Warbler  
*Ficedula hypoleuca* (Pallas, 1764), Pied Flycatcher  
*Panurus biarmicus* (Linnaeus, 1758), Bearded Tit  
*Parus caeruleus* Linnaeus, 1758, Blue Tit  
*Parus major* Linnaeus, 1758, Great Tit  
*Lanius collurio* Linnaeus, 1758, Red Backed Shrike  
*Garrulus glandarius* (Linnaeus, 1758), Jay  
*Passer montanus* (Linnaeus, 1758), Tree Sparrow  
*Emberiza schoeniclus* (Linnaeus, 1758), Reed Bunting  
*Miliaria calandra* (Linnaeus, 1758), Corn Bunting  
*Cervus elaphus* Linnaeus, 1758, Red Deer  
*Capreolus capreolus* (Linnaeus, 1758), Roe Deer  
*Bos primigenius taurus* Linnaeus, 1758, Cow  
*Ovis aries* Linnaeus, 1758, Sheep  
*Equus asinus* Linnaeus, 1758, Donkey  
*Equus caballus* Linnaeus, 1758, Horse  
*Homo sapiens* Linnaeus, 1758, Man

**Survey sites (localities):**

Survey sites are identified by a running number referring to the map in Fig. 1 and UTM grid 10x10 km (given in the second column). The major localities (the province, mountain, etc.) are given first, followed in most cases by the survey site. If separated by a comma (,), the exact locality is situated close to the major one (e.g. Buzet, Istarske toplice). If separated by a colon (:), the survey site is situated at or in the major locality or represents a component of it (e.g. Pag Island: Kolan).

1. VK89 Novi Vinodolski  
2. VK84 Pag Island: Jakišnica  
3. VK92 Pag Island: Kolan  
4. VK92 Pag Island: Kolan, Kolansko blato  
5. VK92 Pag Island: Novalja, Zrće  
6. VK93 Pag Island: Stara Novalja  
7. VK97 Sveti Juraj, Razbojište, Lopci  
8. VK98 Senj  
9. VK98 Senj, below Vratnik  
10. VL12 Buzet, Istarske toplice  
11. VL74 Gerovo  
12. WH96 Vis Island: Žena Glava
Fig. 1. Survey sites of louse flies (Hippoboscidae) in Croatia.

13. WJ85  Drniš, Pakovo Selo
14. WL77  Zagreb
15. WL79  Kraljičin zdenac
16. WL97  Zagreb, Dugo Selo
17. WM70  Orehoština
18. XJ03  Lečenica, Dugobabe
19. XJ22  Klis, Kurtovići
20. XJ23  Muć, Neorić
21. XL87  Virovitica
22. XM13  Čakovec
23. YL22 Kula  
24. YL23 Kutjevo  
25. BN62 Dubrovnik  
26. BR77 Donji Miholjac, Podpanj ornithological reserve  
27. CR24 Osijek  
28. CR25 Osijek, Kopačevko, Sakadaš  
29. CR36 Beli Manastir, Tikveš  
30. CR37 Beli Manastir, Zmajevac

RESULTS

Altogether 127 specimens were studied, representing 11 species of louse flies classified in 8 genera (*Crataerina*, *Hippobosca*, *Lipoptena*, *Ornithoica*, *Ornithomya*, *Ornithophila* and *Stenepteryx*). The majority of specimens belonged to the genus *Hippobosca* (43), followed by the genus *Lipoptena* (35), *Ornithomya* (27), *Stenepteryx* (9), *Ornithoica* (6), *Crataerina* (5), and finally the genera *Icosta* and *Ornithophila* each with only one collected specimen. Nine species of louse flies are new records for the fauna of Croatia: *Ornithoica turdi*, *Ornithophila metallica*, *Ornithomya avicularia*, *Ornithomya biloba*, *Ornithomya chloropus*, *Ornithomya fringillina*, *Crataerina melbae*, *Stenepteryx hirundinis* and *Icosta minor* (for details see below). The louse flies were collected at 30 localities covering 27 10x10 km squares on the UTM grid of Croatia.

Survey of the recorded species

*Hippobosca equina* Linnaeus, 1758
Zagreb, Senj, Orehovica, Kula, Osijek (Langhoffer, 1928)

2♂ 4♀ Novi Vinodolski, 20 m, 20. VII. 1996, from *Equus caballus*, leg. S. Krčmar

4♂ 6♀ Sveti Juraj, Razbojište, Lopci, 1040 m, 12. VIII. 2000, from *Equus caballus*, leg. S. Krčmar

3♀ Vis Island: Žena Glava, 180 m, 9. VI. 2003, from *Equus asinus*, leg. S. Krčmar (FPO)

3♀ Drniš, Pakovo Selo, 258 m, 6. VII. 2003, from *Bos primigenius taurus*, leg. S. Krčmar (FPO)

1♂ 4♀ Lećenica, Dugobabe, 430 m, 17. X. 2000, from 2 individuals of *Bos primigenius taurus*, leg. T. Trilar

6♀ ibidem, 4. V. 2001, from 2 individuals of *Bos primigenius taurus*, leg. T. Trilar, V. Punda-Polič

1♀ Klis, Kurtovići, 380 m, 4. V. 2001, from *Ovis aries*, leg. T. Trilar, V. Punda-Polič

2♂ 1♀ ibidem, from 2 individuals of *Bos primigenius taurus*, leg. T. Trilar, V. Punda-Polič
2♂ 1♀ Muč, Neorić, 480 m, 17. X. 2000, from Bos primigenius taurus, leg. T. Trilar
1♂ 1♀ Kutjevo, 230 m, 17. V. 1997, from Bos primigenius taurus, leg. S. Krčmar
1♀ Osijek, Kopačevo, Sakadaš, 80 m, 29. V. 2004, from Equus caballus, leg. S. Krčmar (FPO)

The major host of this monoxene species is E. caballus. It is quite often found on B. p. taurus and E. asinus and it can also bite humans.

**Ornithoica turdi** (Olivier, 1811)

1♂ Pag Island: Kolan, Kolansko blato, 10 m, 17. VIII. 1997, from Sylvia borin, leg. D. Šere
1♂ ibidem, 20. VIII. 1998, from Lanius collurio
1♀ ibidem, 1. IX. 2004, from Acrocephalus scirpaceus, leg. D. Šere
1♂ Pag Island: Stara Novalja, 30 m, 1. XII. 2000, from Parus caeruleus, leg. D. Šere
1♀ Donji Miholjac, Podpanj ornithological reserve, 2. IX. 1999, from Passer montanus, leg. Z. Tadić

Non-specialised species, parasitizing mainly small Passeriformes.

**Ornithophila metallica** (Schiner, 1864)

1♀ Pag Island: Kolan, 40 m, 4. VI. 1999, from Miliaria calandra, leg. D. Šere

Parasitizing a wide range of Passeriformes, Coraciiformes and Piciformes.

**Ornithomya avicularia** (Linnaeus, 1758)

1♂ Pag Island: Jakišnica, 20 m, 25. V. 2002, from Emberiza melanocephala, leg. D. Šere
1♀ Pag Island: Kolan, Kolansko blato, 10 m, 12. VIII. 1997, from Acrocephalus arundinaceus, leg. D. Šere
1♀ ibidem, 25. VIII. 1999
1♀ ibidem, 30. VIII. 2004
1♀ ibidem, 26. VIII. 2002, from Acrocephalus scirpaceus
1♀ Senj, below Vratnik, ~350 m, 1. VII. 1960, from Dendrocopos major, leg. A. Lesinger
1♀ ibidem, from Garrulus glandarius
1♀ Gerovo, 585 m, 6. VIII. 1964, from Accipiter gentilis, leg. S. Brelih
1♀ Donji Miholjac, Podpanj ornithological reserve, 24. VIII. 1999, from Locustella fluviatilis, leg. Z. Tadić
1♀ Beli Manastir, Zmajevac, 125 m, 28. VIII. 2003, from Homo sapiens, leg. S. Krčmar (FPO)

Very abundant species with a wide range of bird hosts.
**Ornithomya biloba** (Dufour, 1827)

♀ Zagreb, Dugo Selo, 100 m, 22. VI. 1956, from the nest of *Turdus merula*, leg. S. Brelih

♀ Donji Miholjac, Podpanj ornithological reserve, 15. IX. 1998, from *Passer montanus*, leg. Z. Tadić

♀ ibidem, 15. IX. 1998, from *Locustella luscinioides*

♂ ibidem, 22. VIII. 1999, from *Hirundo rustica*

♀ ibidem, 24. VIII. 1999, from *Passer montanus*

♀ ibidem, 25. VIII. 1999, from *Hirundo rustica*

♂ 1♀ ibidem, 3. IX. 1999, from *Ficedula hypoleuca*

♀ ibidem, 9. IX. 1999, from *Delichon urbica*

♀ ibidem, 11. IX. 1999, from *Hirundo rustica*

♀ ibidem, 21. IX. 1999, from *Erithacus rubecula*

The major host is *H. rustica*, on which the species is found very often and very abundantly. It is occasionally found on other small birds.

**Ornithomya chloropus** (Bergroth, 1901)

♀ Donji Miholjac, Podpanj ornithological reserve, 2. X. 1998, from *Parus major*, leg. Z. Tadić

The species occurs mainly on Passeriformes and it is most probably polyxene.

**Ornithomya fringillina** (Curtis, 1863)

♀ Pag Island: Kolan, Kolansko blato, 10 m, 24. X. 1998, from *Prunella modularis*, leg. D. Šere

♀ Pag Island: Novalja, Zrće, 10 m, 28. X. 1998, from *Parus caeruleus*, leg. D. Šere

♀ Donji Miholjac, Podpanj ornithological reserve, 13. IX. 1998, from *Motacilla flava*, leg. Z. Tadić

♀ ibidem, 23. IX. 1999, from *Parus major*

Polyxene species occurring on small birds.

**Crataerina melbae** (Rondani, 1879)

♂ 2♀ Buzet, Istarske toplice, 50 m, 26. VII. 1994, from *Apus melba*, leg. D. Šere

♀ Dubrovnik, 15 m, 10. VIII. 1964, from *Apus melba*, leg. A. Lesinger

♀ ibidem, 1. VIII. 1976

The major host is *Apus melba*.

**Stenepteryx hirundinis** (Linnaeus, 1758)

♂ 6♀ Buzet, Istarske toplice, 50 m, 15. VIII. 1992, from *Delichon urbica*, leg. D. Šere
The species is highly specialised on *Delichon urbica* and is only occasionally found on other birds.

**Icosta minor (Bigot, 1858)**

1♀ Pag Island: Kolan, 40 m, 18. VIII. 1996, from *Sylvia borin*, leg. D. Šere

The species is specialised on Ciconiiformes and is only occasionally found on other birds.

**Lipoptena cervi (Linnaeus, 1758)**

3♂ Kraljičin zdenac, (LANGHOFFER, 1928)

3♂ 4P Virovitica, 120 m, 28. X. 1966, from *Cervus elaphus*, leg. K. Igalfy

2♂ 2♀ Zagreb, Dugo Selo, 100 m, 9. X. 1964, from *Capreolus capreolus*, leg. K. Igalfy

Donji Miholjac, Podpanj ornithological reserve, 6. X. 1998, from *Pruella modularis*, leg. Z. Tadić

ibidem, 16. X. 1998, from *Emberiza schoeniclus*

ibidem, 21. IX. 1999, from *Troglodytes troglodytes*

ibidem, 15. X. 1999, from *Panurus biarmicus*

ibidem, 21. X. 1999, from *Troglodytes troglodytes*

ibidem, 21. X. 1999, from *Panurus biarmicus*

ibidem, 23. X. 1999, from *Parus caeruleus*

ibidem, 24. X. 1999, from *Emberiza schoeniclus*

Beli Manastir, Tikveš, 80 m, 30. X. 2003, from vegetation, leg. S. Krčmar (FPO)

ibidem, 31. X. 2003

An oligoxene species parasitizing on Cervidae. Individuals of the autumn generation in particular often alight on many different warm-blooded vertebrates. Our material shows that on both the major hosts, *Cervus elaphus* and *Capreolus capreolus*, puparia are also often found, which is not the case on occasional hosts.

**DISCUSSION**

The louse fly (Hippoboscidae) fauna of Croatia has not yet been sufficiently researched. Previously, LANGHOFFER (1928) published records for only two species (*H. equina* and *L. cervi*), but without any further data (i.e. neither date, locality, number of specimens, sex, nor name of collectors). Also in a book dealing with the diseases of horses BABIĆ et al. (1953) mentioned the louse fly species *H. equina* and *H. camelina* Leach, 1817. In our opinion this citation is irrelevant from the faunistic point of view and the second species could have been misidentified or simply uncritically cited from another literature source. During the last two decades we have been able
to obtain some additional material collected more or less sporadically during bird- 
ringing fieldwork and from various entomological field collecting (mainly horse 
flies [Tabanidae]), which has resulted in the recording of 9 species of louse flies 
new to the fauna of Croatia: *Ornithoica turdi*, *Ornithophila metallica*, *Ornithomya avi-
cularia*, *Ornithomya biloba*, *Ornithomya chloropus*, *Ornithomya fringillina*, *Crataerina mel-
bae*, *Stenepteryx hirundinis* and *Icosta minor*. The present knowledge is not the final 
status of Croatian hippoboscid fauna. We can expect some species that are already 
known in neighbouring countries (Slovenia, Hungary). We can also expect some 
specialised louse fly species, the hosts of which occur in Croatia, i.e. *Melophagus ovinus* 
(Linnaeus, 1758) parasitizing on *Ovis aries*; *Ornithophila gestroi* (Rondani, 1878) 
highly specialised on *Falco eleonorae* Géné, 1839 or *Olfercia fumipennis* (Sahlberg, 
1886) known from *Pandion haliaetus* (Linnaeus, 1758).

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to thank Mr. Zdravko Tadić and Mr. Dare Šere for donations of 
material.

Received October 8, 2004

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SAŽETAK

Prilog poznavanju faune ušara Hrvatske (Diptera: Hippoboscidae)

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Pregledom radova objavljenih u entomološkim časopisima za Hrvatsku faunu navode se samo 2 vrste ušara (Hippoboscidae) (LANGHOFFER, 1928). U posljednjih dvadeset godina uspjeli smo uzorkovati nekoliko jedinki, više ili manje usput, pri prstenovanju ptica ili pri uzorkovanju drugih skupina kukaca. Ušare su pronađene na 30 lokaliteta koji pokrivaju 27 polja na UTM mreži Hrvatske. U skupljenom uzorku utvrđeno je 11 vrsta od kojih su konjska ušara (*Hippobosca equina*) i jelenska ušara (*Lipoptena cervi*) već poznate iz literature, a ostale su nove u fauni Hrvatske: drozdova ušara (*Ornithoica turdi*), sjajna ušara (*Ornithophila metallica*), velika ptičja ušara (*Ornithomya avicularia*), lastavičja ušara (*Ornithomya biloba*), tamna ptičja ušara (*Ornithomya chloropus*), mala ptičja ušara (*Ornithomya fringillina*), velika čioptina ušara (*Crataerina melbae*), piljkova ušara (*Stenepteryx hirundinis*), mala čapljina ušara (*Icosta minor*). Na temelju literaturnih podataka i obavljenih uzorkovanja u fauni Hrvatske utvrđeno je ukupno 11 vrsta ušara svrstanih u 8 rodova.