Parasites (Trematoda, Nematoda, Phthiraptera) of Two Arkansas Raptors (Accipitriformes: Accipitridae; Strigiformes: Strigidae)


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Running Title: Parasites of Arkansas Raptors

Abstract

Very little is known about the helminth parasites of hawks and owls of Arkansas. We had the opportunity to salvage 2 road-killed raptors, a red-shouldered hawk (*Buteo lineatus*) and a great horned owl (*Bubo virginianus*) from the state and examine them for ecto- and endoparasites. Found were chewing lice (*Degeeriella fulva*) and a nematode (*Porrocaecum angusticolle*) on/in *B. lineatus*, and 3 digenean trematodes (*Echinoparyphium* sp., *Strigea elegans*, *Neodiplostomum americanum*), and nematode eggs (*Capillaria* sp.) in *B. virginianus*. We document 6 new distributional records for these parasites.

Introduction

Birds of prey or raptors make up an invaluable portion of the avian fauna of Arkansas (James and Neal 1986). In adjacent Oklahoma, novel information on the parasites of raptors has been gained recently by our research group from examination of salvaged road-killed specimens (McAllister et al. 2017, 2018). However, we are aware of only a single previous report (Richardson and Nickol 1995) on parasites (acanthocephalans) from great horned owls (*Bubo virginianus*) in Benton and Madison counties of the state, and nothing is available on parasites from any hawks of Arkansas. Here, we report new state records for 6 parasites found on/in 2 salvaged raptors of Arkansas.

Materials and Methods

An adult red-shouldered hawk (*Buteo lineatus*) was found dead on the road (DOR) on 9 February 2018 at 3.2 km E of Lockesburg off US 371, Sevier County (33°57'30.04"N, 94°07'53.78"W). In addition, an adult *B. virginianus* was found DOR on 28 May 2018 off St. Hwy. 14 in the vicinity of Caney, Marion County (36°06'26.18"N, 92°37'53.90"W). These specimens appeared to be recently killed and their bodies showed no sign of putrification. They were examined for most parasites but not examined for subcutaneous helminths or *Trichinella* sp. Their feathers were brushed for ectoparasites and those found were placed in a vial of 70% (v/v) ethanol; specimens were cleared in 10% potassium hydroxide, dehydrated through an ethanol series, further cleared in xylene, and slide-mounted in Canada balsam (Price et al. 2003). A mid-ventral incision was made to expose the viscera and blood samples were taken directly from the heart, smeared onto a microscopic slide and allowed to dry, then fixed in absolute methanol for 1 minute, stained in Giemsa for 30 minutes, and rinsed in neutral buffered phosphate saline. The gastrointestinal (GI) tract from the throat to cloaca was removed, rinsed in 0.9% saline, and organs placed in individual Petri dishes. Several 100 mm sections of the GI tract were cut, split lengthwise, and examined under a stereomicroscope for endoparasites. Feces from the rectum from both raptors were collected and placed in 2.5% potassium dichromate. Fecal flotations were accomplished with Sheather’s sugar solution (sp. gr. 1.30). Trematodes were rinsed in saline, fixed in hot tap water without coverslip pressure, preserved in 70% ethanol, stained in acetocarmine, cleared in methyl salicylate, and coverslip mounted in Canada balsam. Nematode ova from the fecal flotation were placed on a microscopic slide, coverslip mounted, and photographed. Photovoucher hosts were deposited in the Henderson State University (HSU) collection, Arkadelphia, Arkansas. Voucher specimens of ectoparasites were deposited in the General Ectoparasite Collection of the Arkansas Museum of Natural Science.
Results and Discussion

A nematode and chewing louse was recovered from B. lineatus and 3 digeneans, and a nematode egg was found in B. virginianus. An eimerian coccidian was also found in B. virginianus and was reported in a recent report that included molecular analyses (McAllister et al. 2019). The blood smears were negative and no cestodes or acanthocephalans were found. Data is presented below in annotated format.

TREMATODA: DIGENA: ECHINOSTOMATIDAE

Echinoparyphium sp. – Very young juvenile specimens of an Echinoparyphium sp. was collected from the intestinal tract of B. virginianus. Echinoparyphium species are common, widely distributed intestinal parasites causing disease in animals worldwide. Intermediate hosts include a variety of taxa, including freshwater snails, mussels, planarians, fish, frogs, and aquatic turtles, whereas the definitive hosts are mainly birds and mammals (Huffman and Fried 2012). Echinoparyphium recurvatum (von Linstow) has been reported in B. virginianus from Alberta, Canada (Ramalingam and Samuel 1978). We report the genus from Arkansas for the first time.

STRIGEIDAE

Strigea elegans Chandler & Rausch, 1947. – A single specimen was taken from the intestinal tract of B. virginianus. This digenean was originally described from 6 of 22 (27%) B. virginianus from Wisconsin (Chandler and Rausch 1947). It was later redescribed by Dubois and Rausch (1950) from the same host and locale. The life cycle is a 4-host obligatory one that involves snails as first intermediate hosts, bufonid and ranid tadpoles as second intermediate hosts, watersnakes and ducks as third intermediate hosts (with tetracotyles), and owls as final hosts (Pearson 1959; Miller et al. 1965). Kinsella et al. (2001) reported S. elegans in B. virginianus from Florida. We document S. elegans from Arkansas for the first time.

DIPLOSTOMIDAE

Neodiplstromum americanum Chandler and Rausch, 1947. – Three specimens were recovered from the intestinal tract of B. virginianus. This trematode has been reported previously from B. virginianus from Connecticut, Florida, Mississippi, and Wisconsin (see Woodyard et al. 2017). It has also been reported from other raptors, including Accipiter spp., Asio otus, Athene cunicularia, Buteo spp., Megacrops asio, and Strix varia from Connecticut, Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Wisconsin, and Ontario, Canada (Woodyard et al. 2017). We report a new state record for N. americanum as well as the first report of this parasite from west of the Mississippi River.

NEMATODA: ANISAKIDAE

Porrocaecum angusticolle (Molin, 1860) Baylis and Daubney, 1922. – Five (4 male, 1 female) P. angusticolle (HWML 110402) were found in the stomach of B. lineatus. Porrocaecum angusticolle was originally described as Ascaris angusticollis by Molin (1860) from specimens collected from the intestines of common buzzard (Buteo buteo) and osprey (Pandion haliaetus) from Europe. It was transferred to the genus Porrocaecum by Baylis and Daubney (1922). This nematode has been reported from 6 species of hawks from the Nearctic Realm (Table 1). We document the first report of P. angusticolle from Arkansas.

TRICHURIIDAE: CAPILLARIIDAE

Capillaria sp. – Ova of a Capillaria sp. (Fig. 1) were recovered from the feces of B. virginianus. Two capillarid species have previously been reported from B. virginianus, including C. falconis (Rudolfi) from Florida, Wisconsin, and Alberta, Canada, and C. tennissima (Rudolfi) from Florida (Read 1949; Ramalingam and Samuel 1978; Kinsella et al. 2001) and Connecticut (Richardson and Kinsella 2010). This is the first time Capillaria sp. ova have been reported from any owl from the state.

ARTHROPODA: INSECTA: PHTHIRAPTERA: ISCHINOCERA: PHILOPTERIDAE

Degeeriella fulva (Giebel, 1874). – Several D. fulva (Fig. 2) were taken from B. lineatus. This louse has been previously reported from B. lineatus as well as 27 other species of raptors belonging to 9 different genera (Price et al. 2003). We document a new state record for this louse in Arkansas.

In conclusion, we document several new distributional records for parasites of B. lineatus and B. virginianus. Most importantly, additional parasites are reported for the first time from an Arkansas B. virginianus and others from B. lineatus from the state.
Figures 1 and 2. Parasites of Bubo virginianus and Buteo lineatus. (1) Embryonated capillarid egg from feces of B. virginianus. Note characteristic bipolar plugs. Scale bar = 250 µm. (2) Chewing louse, Degeeriella fulva from B. lineatus. Scale bar = 1.0 mm.

Although this survey included only 2 specimens, it continues to illustrate the significance of salvaging road-killed raptors which can yield knowledge on their parasites that could not be obtained otherwise because of state and federal restrictions on collecting and euthanizing migratory birds.

Acknowledgments

The Arkansas Game and Fish Commission and U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service issued Scientific Collecting Permits to CTM. We thank Ethan T. Woodyard (Mississippi St. University) for examining some trematodes. We dedicate this paper to the memory of Drs. Douglas A. James (1925‒2018) and Kimberly G. Smith (1948‒2018), renowned ornithologists of the University of Arkansas.

Literature Cited


McAllister CT, LA Durden, KN Brecheisen, and WK Reeves. 2018. New ectoparasite (Phthiraptera; Siphonaptera; Diptera) records from birds (Strigiformes: Passeriformes) and mammals (Lagomorpha; Rodentia) in southeastern Oklahoma. Proceedings of the Oklahoma Academy of Science 98:33–36.


Table 1. Records of *Porrocaecum angusticolle* in hawks from the Nearctic Realm.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Common Name</th>
<th>Species</th>
<th>Locality</th>
<th>Reference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cooper’s hawk*</td>
<td><em>Accipiter cooperi</em></td>
<td>North America*</td>
<td>Morgan and Schiller (1950)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharp-shinned hawk*</td>
<td><em>A. velox</em></td>
<td>North America*</td>
<td>Morgan and Schiller (1950)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Red-tailed hawk</td>
<td><em>Buteo borealis</em></td>
<td>North America†</td>
<td>Morgan and Schiller (1950)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Red-shouldered hawk</td>
<td><em>B. lineatus</em></td>
<td>E. North America†</td>
<td>Canavan (1929)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Arkansas, USA</td>
<td>This report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broads-winged hawk</td>
<td><em>B. platypterus</em></td>
<td>North America*</td>
<td>Morgan and Schiller (1950)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Florida, USA</td>
<td>Kinsella <em>et al.</em> (1995)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marsh hawk</td>
<td><em>Circus hudsonius</em></td>
<td>North America*</td>
<td>Morgan and Schiller (1950)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Locales not given.
†Captives from Philadelphia Zoo.