

BOOK REVIEW

M.L. Sood: Nematode Parasites of Birds (Including Poultry) from South Asia. *International Book Distributing Co., Lucknow (India) 2006. ISBN 81-8189-015-9, hardback, 824 pp., 495 figs. Price: US\$ 100.00.*

From the zoogeographical point of view, South Asia is a remarkable region the specific fauna of which is noted for its high degree of diversity and species-richness. This also applies to both birds and their parasites. Parasitic nematodes, one of the most important groups of bird parasites, are not only a theoretical interest, but many species are known to be agents of serious diseases in poultry or in captive (in zoological gardens) and wild birds.

Already 70 years elapsed since the first comprehensive treatise on parasitic nematodes from India was published by H.A. Baylis (1936, 1939) in the series *Fauna of British India*. Since then, an enormous amount of literature has accumulated. In an effort to update Baylis' account, the much-needed compilation was initiated by Prof. M.L. Sood, a well-known Indian helminthologist from the Punjab Agricultural University in Ludhiana, in 1989, when his book "Fish Nematodes of South Asia" appeared (reviewed in *Folia Parasitol.* 38: 216, 1991), followed by "Amphibian Nematodes of South Asia" and "Reptilian Nematodes from South Asia" in 1990 and 1999, respectively (last named reviewed in *Folia Parasitol.* 47: 284, 2000).

This fourth, comprehensive volume summarises all available information on the nematode fauna of birds including poultry in South Asia (Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Myanmar [Burma], Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka). The species survey, taking up the majority of the book (651 pp.), deals with 465 nematode species belonging to 75 genera of 25 families. Like in the earlier volumes, the description, hosts, localisation, distribution and relevant notes are given for each species. The majority of species are also illustrated, with drawings taken from the original papers. However, no keys to species or to higher taxa are provided this time.

The author reports all nematode species described to-date from birds of this geographical region, including sometimes those which have already been synonymised with others (this is mentioned in the accompanying remarks) or for which the systematic status is not clear. This survey again documents the unsatisfactory situation in the taxonomy of bird nematodes from this region where, usually without a critical evaluation of previous data, a number of additional, mostly inadequately or

erroneously described species are newly established. Therefore, detailed taxonomic revisions in individual groups of these nematodes are highly needed. The presented survey also includes a few species of the genera *Cucullanus* and *Rhabdochona* described from Indian fish-eating birds. However, the author correctly remarks that these are, undoubtedly, parasites of fish and that their findings in birds are only accidental.

The author mentions that in the book the nematode species are basically arranged into higher taxa according to the classification proposed in the "CIH Keys to the Nematode Parasites of Vertebrates" (eds. R.C. Anderson et al.) (1974–1983). However, now this classification is somewhat out of date. For example, it is a pity that the author still follows Anderson and Bain (1982) in taking all capillariids for members of a single genus *Capillaria* s.l., whereas nowadays the classification of many capillariid genera is generally accepted (see also Anderson 1992, 2000). The correct name of the superfamily is no longer Trichuroidea, but Trichinelloidea according to the latest issue of the International Code of Zoological Nomenclature (1999). The reported species *Capillaria columbae* is a recognised junior synonym of *Baruscapillaria obsignata*. It is not clear why the author mentions the genus *Thominx* on page 8, when it is a junior synonym of *Capillaria*.

In providing relevant data concerning all the hitherto described species of bird nematodes (otherwise scattered in many, often barely accessible journals), the survey may be an indispensable source of information for subsequent students in this field. Valuable parts of the book include the Systematic Position of Nematode Parasites of Birds (23 pages), the Host-Parasite List (77 pages) and a list of references (31 pages). Indexes of authors, parasites and hosts are also provided.

The book represents the first monograph devoted specifically to nematode parasites of birds in South Asia. Similarly to other volumes, it will undoubtedly become not only an indispensable aid for the identification of these parasites from birds in South Asian countries, but also the basis for subsequent revisions of taxonomy as well as studies on the biology, ecology and zoogeography of these parasites in the region.

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