

Research Note

THE WING LOUSE, *LIPEURUS CAPONIS* (L.) (MALLOPHAGA: PHILOPTERIDAE) ATTACKING POULTRY IN PUERTO RICO

In Puerto Rico entomologists dealing with biting lice attacking poultry commonly consider *Menopon gallinae* or *Menacanthus stramineus* to be the species involved. The common name of the first species is the shaft louse. It is also known as "piojo de la caña de la pluma" or as the "feather-shaft chicken louse." In the publication "Control de plagas de importancia económica en Puerto Rico"¹, the only name given under biting chicken lice is *Menacanthus stramineus*, the chicken body louse. Wolcott,² without further information, simply states that the latter species is common on chicken and turkeys.

Different authors mention as many as 14 species of *Mallophaga* as infesting the domestic fowl, and include the two above-mentioned species among the three most common and important.³ The third is usually *Cuclotogaster heterographus*. A key to the species of biting lice attacking the domestic fowl and a clarification of the names involved are given by Ansari⁴ along with other pertinent information.

The junior author found fowl heavily infested by *Lipeurus caponis*, with other species much less abundant, at a chicken farm of moderate size located in Barrio Voladora, Moca, P.R., road 111, Km 10.3, although this species (identified by the senior author) is considered less important than the three mentioned previously. As the name implies, *L. caponis* usually stays around the shaft of large feathers of the wings. In the case herein reported lice were found all over the body, inflicting heavy damage to both feathers and skin (fig. 1, A, B). A standard systematic count was not made, but the severe damage is evident from the broken feathers and scaly and ulcerated skin of the chicken.

The flock, of about 5,000 Golden Comet and Shavers hens, was treated with malathion as recommended by González Flores and Inserni⁵ and the

¹ Esta. Exp. Agric., Univ. P.R., 1977. Control de plagas de importancia económica en Puerto Rico (Rev.), Publ. 91: 1-156.

² Wolcott, George N., 1948. The insects of Puerto Rico, J. Agric. Univ. P.R., 31(1-4): 1-975.

³ Barger, E. H., Canel, L. E., and Pomeroy, R. S., 1958. Diseases and parasites of poultry, Lea Febiger, Philadelphia, 5th ed.

⁴ Ansari, S. R., 1956. Synoptic table for the determination of Mallophaga infesting the domestic fowl (*Gallus gallus domesticus*), Ind. J. Ent. 17(2): 245-70.

⁵ González Flores, M. E., and Inserni, J., 1977. Combate de plagas en la avicultura, Publ. Serv. Ext. Agric., Univ. P.R., 5M Z-61, pp. 9.

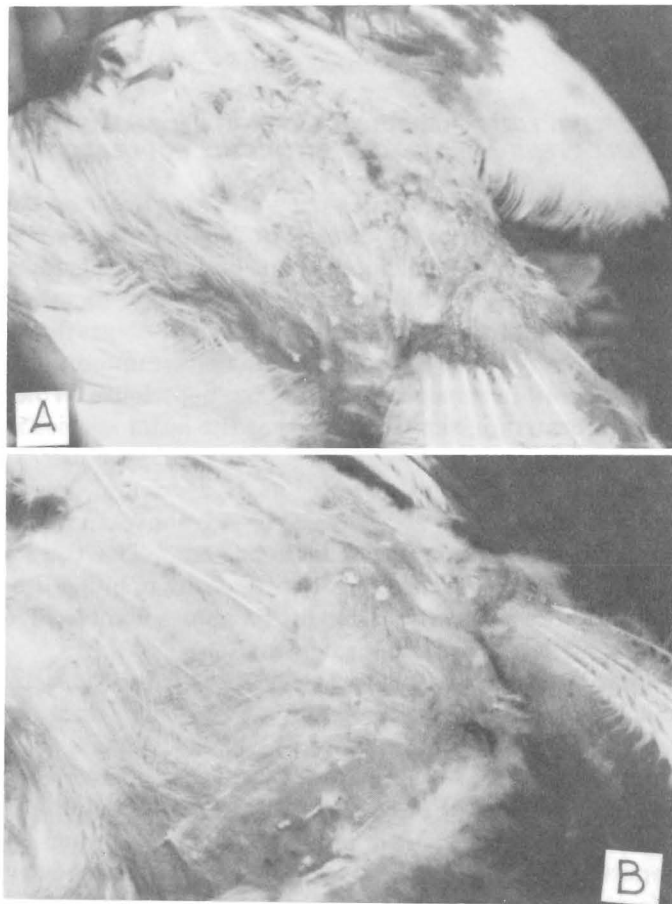


FIG. 1.—The wing louse, *Lipeurus caponis* (L.) (Mallophaga:Philopteridae), attacking poultry in Puerto Rico. A, feathers; B, skin.

damage was promptly stopped. Emulsifiable malathion, 57% strength, was diluted at a rate of 7 oz in 10 gal of water, used at the rate of about 1 gal/100 hens.

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