Occurrence of *Laemobothrion maximum* in Greater Coucal

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Abstract External examination of free range abandoned dead Greater Coucal in a veterinary dispensary, Vellore, Tamil Nadu, India revealed presence of a large sized louse in the feathers and was identified as *Laemobothrion maximum* on the basis of morphology and size of the louse.

Keywords *Laemobothrion maximum* · Greater Coucal · India

The Greater Coucal or Crow Pheasant (*Centropus sinensis*) is a large non-parasitic member of the cuckoo order of birds the Cuculiformes. They are large, crow-like with a long tail and coppery brown wings and found in wide range of habitats from jungle to cultivation and urban gardens in all over India. They are found to feed predominantly on snails in Tamil Nadu (Ali 2002). Parasites can severely compromise the health and vigour of Greater Coucal and may cause severe illness and some times death. Various parasites like, *Haemoproteus centropi* (Peirce 1977), *Haemaphysalis* sp. (Hoogstraal et al. 1972) and *Colpocephalum sinensis* (Price 1968) were previously reported in Greater Coucal. The present communication revealed the occurrence of a mallophagan louse *Laemobothrion maximum* in a Greater Coucal.

One dead bird belonging to Greater Coucal found abandoned in the campus of Veterinary Dispensary,

Vellore, Tamil Nadu, India. A veterinarian promptly examined the dead bird and found one large sized louse in feathers of the bird. The louse specimen was collected in a sterile glass container and shifted to Dept, of Veterinary Parasitology, Madras Veterinary College, Chennai, India for identification. The louse specimen was processed by routine parasitological method for identification. The specimen was examined in detail to ascertain its specific identity.

The collected louse was observed in feathers and shaft of the feathers of Greater Coucal. The absence of more than one louse can be due to increased postmortem interval after death. The large female louse measuring about 1 cm was identified as *L. maximum* belonging to Mallophaga based on Dik (2006) (Figs. 1, 2, 3). Some measurement of *L. maximum*: head length: 1.92 mm; head width: 1.90 mm; cephalic index: 1.03; thorax length: 2.23 mm; abdomen length: 6.41 mm; abdomen width: 3.10 mm; total length: 10.56 mm. The morphology and morphometry of the louse was similar as that previous reports (Nelson and Price 1965; Lakshminarayana 1967; Dik and Ozkayhan 2007; Inci et al. 2010). They reported the occurrence of *L. maximum* in gruiformes, falconiformes, ciconiformes and galliformes birds. However the present report revealed the occurrence of *L. maximum* in Greater Coucal of Cuculiformes and found to be first of its kind.

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Fig. 1 Full view of female louse *L. maximum*

Fig. 2 Head end of *L. maximum* showing prominent lateral preocular swellings in front of eyes

Fig. 3 Tail end of *L. maximum* showing long and small setae

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