

Four new species of *Myrsidea* Waterston chewing lice (Phthiraptera: Menoponidae) from the Malagasy warblers (Passeriformes)

ROGER D. PRICE¹ & KEVIN P. JOHNSON²

¹4202 Stanard Circle, Fort Smith, AR 72903, USA. rpricelice@aol.com

²Illinois Natural History Survey, 1816 South Oak Street, Champaign, IL 61820, USA.
E-mail: kjohnson@inhs.uiuc.edu

Abstract

Four new species of the menoponid genus *Myrsidea* Waterston are described from the Malagasy warblers. These new species and their type hosts are: *M. yoshizawai* ex the Short-billed tetraka, *Xanthomixis zosterops andapae* (Salomonsen); *M. goodmani* ex the Long-billed bernieria, *Bernieria madagascariensis madagascariensis* (J.F. Gmelin); *M. mccrackeni* ex the White-throated oxylabes, *Oxylabes madagascariensis* (J.F. Gmelin); and *M. batesi* ex the Long-billed bernieria, *B. m. madagascariensis* (J.F. Gmelin). These represent the first species of *Myrsidea* to be described from this group of hosts. We also sequenced a portion of the mitochondrial COI gene for these and other species of *Myrsidea*.

Key words: chewing lice, *Myrsidea*, Phthiraptera, Menoponidae, Madagascar

Introduction

The genus *Myrsidea* Waterston currently contains 272 recognized species of chewing lice, with 260 of these recorded from hosts within the order Passeriformes, 9 from the Piciformes, and 3 from the Apodiformes (see Price *et al.* 2003, Johnson and Price 2006, Price and Dalglish 2006, Sychra *et al.* 2006). In our continuing work on the taxonomy of *Myrsidea*, we have found that species of lice are confined to individual host families, and that treating *Myrsidea* by host family units is the only practical way to deal with this genus. However, this approach requires accurate avian taxonomies. The Malagasy warblers are a group of songbirds (Passeriformes) formerly classified into three separate families because of large morphological disparities. However, recent work has shown this to be an endemic radiation of songbirds on Madagascar (Cibois *et al.* 1999, 2001). This group of Malagasy endemics is probably most closely related to the megalurine warblers