

Scanning electron microscopical observations on the louse *Seamundssonina lari* from the Grey-headed gull.

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An extensive literature search revealed that no scanning electron microscopical investigation has, to date, been performed on *Seamundssonina lari*, a mallophagean louse, feeding parasitically on the feathers of many gull species.

Live lice were collected from Grey-headed gulls that congregate on a landfill site near Johannesburg. The specimens were fixed in 70% ethanol and identified. The lice were routinely prepared for scanning electron microscopy and viewed in a Leica Stereoscan 420. The SEM investigation revealed several micromorphological features which confirmed the identification of the lice. Previously unrecorded features were also noted. The head corresponded to that of the typical philopterid genus *Seamundssonina*. Prominent characteristics on the dorsal surface included a broad hyaline margin on the ante-clypeus, the dorsal anterior plate showed a thickened, pointed anterior margin, two prominent lateral pre-antennal trabeculae and a broad post-antennal suture. Ventrally the left mandible revealed the typical toothed molar lobe characteristic of *Seamundssonina*. Peg organs comprising ten sensilla occurred on the antennal tips. The thorax had two lateral ovoidly shaped mesothoracic spiracles. Each leg bore two pretarsal claws that were apposed by three robust pretarsal setae. Six pairs of abdominal spiracles were present on segments III - VIII whilst the second segment only showed a stigmatal scar with no spiracle. Caudally directed, laterally positioned, pointed processes were recorded on segments I & II.