

Abstract

Haemosporidia are a group of protozoan parasites that shifts between vertebrates and insect vectors during a complicated life cycle. In this thesis I have focused on two of the genera infecting birds, *Plasmodium* and *Haemoproteus* (sometimes together referred to as avian malaria) in terms of their host specificity and prevalence in avian hosts and vectors. These globally distributed genera have different vectors, and although they both attack bird hosts, they have different host specificities. While the genus *Plasmodium* is rather generalistic, the genus *Haemoproteus* is more host specific.

Key words: host specificity, prevalence, bird *Plasmodium*, *Haemoproteus*, vector, bird host