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Bed Bugs Limited

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Information about Bird Mites

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INFORMATION ABOUT BIRD MITES

Contents

Forward:.....	3
Caution.....	3
Overview:.....	3
Images.....	4
Symptoms / Bites.....	5
Solution.....	5
About this document.....	6



Forward:

From time to time we are called upon to identify unknown pests or to investigate a suspected case of bed bugs. On a number of occasions the pest responsible turned out to be bird mites. These may be found in low numbers but in extreme cases can swarm in thousands. They are an extremely difficult pest to contain once in a property. Identification of the source of the problem and professional treatment will quickly resolve the issue but access to the infestation site often require specialist equipment and training which you are more likely to get through a pest controller who specialises in bird proofing work.

Caution

Live samples should not be caught; they have an extreme ability to escape from captivity and unlike many insects will easily climb smooth surfaces, to capture samples for identification use tape to gently immobilise onto card.

Overview:

Bird mites are another parasitic insect which seem to be on the increase. They can crop up in properties where birds have been nesting but are no longer present. They are small mites which get carried to the roosting area and occupy the nesting area. If birds are not present they may ingress into a property to seek food.

External and internal examination of the property will often identify the nesting location which must be removed and all the affected areas treated. They leave no trace signs such as the bed bug associated faecal traces and may be difficult to identify. They are usually closely associated with the nesting area but have been known to travel significant distances between nesting and feeding locations.

Once inside a property bird mites are often found at the ceiling junctions and around windows. They react to changes in temperature and carbon dioxide and will often use these as a signal for when a host is present.

They are frequently a lot smaller than bed bugs / bat bugs or bird bugs and may appear to be mobile black dots. They are not related to bed bugs and fall into the taxonomic classification of mites as opposed to bugs. The pictures below were taken on a case where the bathroom window was the ingress point and the nest was some 7 - 10 meters away on some poorly maintained guttering which was the site of waste building up and a birds nest. To indicate size the height of this part of the window frame was about 3 inches, a standard sized for Victorian sash frames.

Images



Bird mites crawling on the inside of a wooden sash window frame, the height of this section of frame is about 5cm, they are on the edge of human sight and are most often described as like moving full stops or dust particles.



Close up of adult and nymph bird mites. The juveniles are smaller in appearance and more translucent than the adults.



Macro close up of adult bird mite. Inspection using a magnifying glass or jewelers loop makes the forward facing antennae very obvious and distinguishing from bedbugs.

Symptoms / Bites

The associated bites may look similar to bed bugs and as with bed bugs the degree of bite response is affected by your own immune response and environment. Anyone who claims to be able to identify an insect from its bite other than fleas which have a characteristic red dot in the centre is not taking an accurate scientific approach to identifying your problem.

There are also no accurate medical tests to biopsy a bite to indicate what may have caused it.

Solution

If you suspect bird mites in your property do not move any furniture or items in or out of the affected area and be prepared to under go a detailed and thorough inspection to identify and deal with the source of the problem as well as the insects themselves. Control of bird mite ingress requires investigational skills rather than the type of chemical products you use.

The source of the problem must be identified and treated from this point to the areas of the property that are affected. This often requires specialist access equipment and training for working at heights.

A quality pest control contractor will always be able to advise you on how to reduce the risk of bird mite ingress in future through the use of high pressure pointing and bird proofing systems.

We would advise against the use of any domestic chemical products because they may repel the insects rather than eradicate the colony which is what is ultimately required for a long term solution.

When selecting a pest control professional make sure they are experienced at identifying and working with unknown pests, as for what will be done in terms of treatment they are more likely to be focused on first identifying exactly what the problem is.

About this document

This document is provided for public information and to assist people in correctly identifying pest related issues.

Due to the focused nature of our work we are not able to enter into extensive correspondence on this subject outside of consulting agreements. If you wish to discuss the subject of this document in domestic or commercial settings please email info@bed-bugs.co.uk for a consultation quotation.

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