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Letter to the Editor

Response to "First Report of Adult *Brachylaima* sp. (Digenea: Brachylaimidae) Parasitizing Wild Pigeons (*Columba livia*) in the United Arab Emirates"

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Dear Editor-in-Chief

We sincerely thank the authors of the Letter to the Editor for carefully reading our published article (1) and for their thoughtful and constructive comments.

We fully acknowledge that morphological analysis alone is often insufficient for definitive species-level determination, particularly within the taxonomically challenging Brachylaimoidea group. In our study, we compared key morphological characteristics with those of related taxa, which provided a clear diagnostic identity for the specimens collected in the United Arab Emirates. Nevertheless, we agree that referencing a broader and more rigorously standardized morphological dataset would further enhance methodological transparency.

While our primary objective was to identify the *Brachylaima* trematode samples using morphological criteria, we recognize that integrative approaches combining morphology with molecular phylogenetics, ecological data, and biogeographical context are essential for precise species identification. Accordingly, we are currently planning extended investigations on these specimens that will incorporate molecular and ecological methodologies.

We also agree on the importance of including scale bars alongside magnification values to facilitate meaningful size assessment. We further appreciate the suggestion to provide access to preserved samples for future comparative studies.

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Ultimately, targeted follow-up work is required to elucidate the parasite's life cycle, ecological interactions, and overall impact on avian hosts.

Conflict of interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Reference

1. Sulieman Y, Eltayeb R. First Report of Adult *Brachylaima* sp. (Digenea: Brachylaimidae) Parasitizing Wild Pigeons (*Columba livia*) in the United Arab Emirates. Iran J Parasitol. 2026; 21(2): 297–303.