

Rabbit/ grouse tick

(*Haemaphysalis leporispalustris*)

in Alberta



Karvonen Films Ltd

Common name

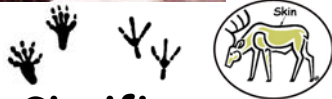
Rabbit tick, grouse
tick

Scientific name

*Haemaphysalis
leporispalustris*

What's Bugging Wild Critters?

Fact sheet #23:
Rabbit/grouse
tick



Significance

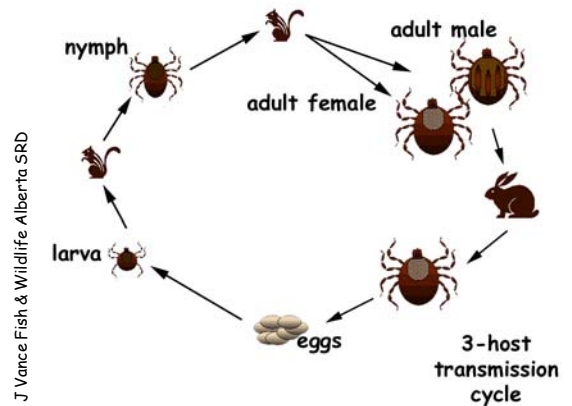
Rabbit tick is yet another benign companion of wildlife. It rarely, if ever, feeds on humans and is not considered a significant health risk.

What? Where? How?

See the fact sheet on [winter tick](#) and [wood tick](#) for basic information regarding ticks.

Transmission Cycle

Like winter tick and wood tick, this tiny tick with the long name is also a hard tick. It most closely resembles the wood tick (although to most people all ticks look the same anyway!) and has a three-host life cycle. Larvae and nymphs may live on rabbits and hares but also make use of a variety of small mammals and some birds, notably ruffed grouse. Each tick stage takes a blood meal, then drops to the ground to moult. The new stage, fresh from its moult, gets back on a mammal or bird to take another blood meal. Some individuals may provide habitat for all 3 stages at the same time; however, the preferred habitat for adult ticks is rabbits or hares. In colder climates it may take more than one year to complete the cycle from egg to adult and back to egg.



Distribution in Alberta

This tick is not seen or reported often in Alberta but undoubtedly many snowshoe hares and jackrabbits and probably many grouse support healthy tick populations. The population of adults apparently peaks during early summer.



M Pybus Fish & Wildlife Alberta SRD

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(*Haemaphysalis leporispalustris*)

Importance for Wildlife Management

Rabbit tick is not a management concern in Alberta.

Prevention/Control

There is no need to control this harmless native species in Alberta.

Public Significance

Rabbit tick very rarely bites humans and is not considered a health concern in Alberta.



M Pybus Fish & Wildlife Alberta SRD

Summary

By far the majority of ticks and tick species in Alberta pose no threat or concern to wildlife or human health. Rabbit tick is a benign little critter that is common on snowshoe hares and jackrabbits throughout the province but causes little or no problem.

Additional Information

Parasitic Diseases of Wild Mammals, Second Edition. Edited by William M. Samuel, Margo J. Pybus and A. Alan Kocan. 2001. Chapter 4 - Ticks.

Canadian Lyme Disease Foundation: <http://www.canlyme.com/alberta.html>

Health Canada, Canada Communicable Disease Report: <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/pphb-dgspsp/publicat/ccdr-rmtc/99vol25/dr2518ea.html>