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New tick (Acari: Ixodidae) records from a mink, *Neovison vison* (Schreber), in Mississippi, U.S.A.

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Abstract

Forty-two specimens of three tick species – *Dermacentor albipictus*, *D. variabilis*, and *Ixodes cookei* – were collected from a single road-killed male American mink, *Neovison vison*, in Leake County, Mississippi, U.S.A. The *D. albipictus* and *I. cookei* collections are new county records. This is the first report of tick collections anywhere in Mississippi from a mink.

Key words: Ixodidae, ticks, host records, American mink, Mississippi

Introduction

Knowledge of tick species present in a given area and their hosts is important to physicians, veterinarians, wildlife biologists, and owners of livestock due to the diseases they transmit, as well as nuisance effects from their bites (Goddard 2008). There have been several studies documenting tick species present in Mississippi (Rhodes & Norment 1979, Jackson & Goddard 1995, Goddard 2006, Goddard & Layton 2006, Goddard & Piesman 2006, Goddard *et al.* 2011) and the disease agents associated with them (Stricklin 1975, Norment *et al.* 1985, Goddard & Norment 1986, Goddard *et al.* 2003, Goddard & Varela-Stokes 2009, Castellaw *et al.* 2010). The American mink, *Neovison vison* (Schreber), occurs in Mississippi but is rarely encountered. The key tick-host papers (Banks 1908, Cooley 1938, Bishopp & Trembley 1945, Cooley & Kohls 1945) report no specimens taken from mink in Mississippi. This paper presents new records for three hard tick species (Ixodidae) found on a mink in the State of Mississippi, U.S.A.

Methods

On February 5, 2012 a male mink was found dead (road killed) in Leake County, near Walnut Grove, central Mississippi. The animal was first carefully visually examined for attached ticks, then its fur was vigorously combed over a white enamel pan partially filled with ethanol. Tick specimens were retrieved, preserved in ethanol and/or mounted on microscope slides, and subsequently identified by the third author (RGR). Voucher specimens of each species were deposited in the Mississippi Entomological Museum, Mississippi State University, accession numbers 80-2o through 80-2q, and 1 specimen (the *D. albipictus* discussed below) was returned to the second author's private