

Research Note

THE DOMESTIC, Felis catus L., A NEW HOST RECORD FOR THE TICK Ornithodoros puertoricensis FOX¹

Cats play an important part in the billion-dollar pet industry, yet their parasites are not precisely known. Because the species affecting cats are often different from those of dogs, it is unwise to put them together in a single list.² This note is the first clear record of ticks parasitizing the cat in Puerto Rico.

On November 29, 1965, in the Santurce section of the city of San Juan, Puerto Rico, the author examined a stray kitten and found two engorged larvae of *Ornithodoros puertoricensis* Fox.³ The next day the kitten was put in a cage, covered with a cloth bag, and left overnight. Three more larvae were collected from the bag December 1. The five larvae were reared to adults and over the years a small colony was derived from them. Larvae were fed on laboratory rats, and nymphs and adults on rabbits and guinea pigs. The colony was abandoned in 1972.

Larvae of *O. puertoricensis* originally came from *Rattus norvegicus* and *R. rattus* in San Juan (Santurce), Puerto Rico, but the tick, on many different hosts, ranges throughout the countries bordering the Caribbean Sea. The larvae parasitize various species of wild rats and wild mice, anteaters, skunks, opossums, forest rabbits, mongooses, lizards, iguanas, and even man.⁴ This is the first record of *O. puertoricensis* on a domestic animal.⁵

Irving Fox
Department of Medical Zoology
School of Medicine, University of Puerto Rico

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² Becklund, W. W., Revised check list of internal and external parasites of domestic animals in the United States and possessions and in Canada. Amer. J. Vet. Res. 25: 1380-416, 1964.

³ Fox, I., *Ornithodoros puertoricensis*, a new tick from rats in Puerto Rico, J. Parasitol. 33: 253-9, 1947.

⁴ Jones, E. K., Clifford, C. M., Keirans, J. E., and Kohls, G. M., Ticks of Venezuela (Acarina: Ixodoidea) with a key to the species of *Amblyomma* in the Western Hemisphere, Brigham Young Univ. Sci. Bull. Ser. 17: 1-40, 1972.

⁵ For advice on ticks the author thanks Mr. S. Medina Gaud, Dr. Carlos H. Miranda, Dr. Benedicto Negrón-Ramos, and Dr. D. de León.