Register of new host-parasite records

New Capillaria records

Two new Capillaria records for New Zealand birds were established. The first related to the detection of small numbers of eggs of this parasite in the faeces of a brown teal (Anas aucklandica chlorotis) from a wildlife park in Christchurch; the second, to the recovery of a single adult worm from the intestine of a road-killed pukeko (Porphyrio porphyrio melanotus) in the Manawatu. Various species of Capillaria are already known to be common parasites of a variety of other domestic, aviary and wild birds in New Zealand (1)(2)(3)(4)(5)(6) but any relationships between these species and those currently reported are unknown.

Nematodes in a scimitar-horned oryx

A number of nematode genera were recovered from the intestinal tract of a scimitar-horned oryx (Oryx dammah) that died at a wildlife park in Christchurch. These included Camelostrongylus mentulatus, Trichostrongylus axei, Trichostrongylus colubriformis, Nematodirus spathiger and Chabertia ovina. All of these parasites have been previously recorded in a range of more common hosts in New Zealand including alpacas, sheep, cattle, goats and deer (7)(8) and it is likely that the oryx acquired its infections while sharing grazing contaminated by one or more of them.

Demodex infection in an alpaca

Demodex mites were found on a yearling male alpaca from a property in the Hawke’s Bay region of the North Island. Although Demodex spp infestations have infrequently been reported or mentioned as incidental findings in llamas (Lama glama) (9) and alpacas (Vicugna pacos) (10) overseas, they have never previously been detected in either of these animals in New Zealand. Generally, Demodex are host-specific mites that are commonly considered to be normal inhabitants of the hair follicles and sebaceous glands of their hosts. However, their presence may occasionally lead to dermatitis (11) and there is some evidence to suggest that this might have been the case in this instance (12).

Pelecitus roemeri in New Zealand

Numerous large slender nematodes with a smooth cuticle and short blunt tails (Figure 1) were found in diced pet food (kangaroo meat) purchased from a Christchurch supermarket. These were subsequently identified as Pelecitus roemeri (formerly Dirofilaria roemeri) sometimes referred to as ‘knee worm’. This filarid nematode occurs in a wide range of Macropodidae in Australia where it is found in the subcutaneous and intramuscular tissues, particularly, but not exclusively, those of the knee region. The worm is specific to the kangaroo (although wallaroos are regarded as the normal definitive hosts) and does not pose a threat to human or animal health. Nevertheless, the appearance of meat from infected carcases is undesirable and heavily infected animals are usually rejected for human consumption and animal food. The parasite has a long...
prepatent period (nine months) and infection is transmitted via microfilariae ingested by blood-sucking tabanid fly intermediate hosts commonly known as horse flies or March flies\(^{(13)}\).

**New Eimeria records**

A number of coccidian oocysts were detected for the first time in the faeces of a brown teal (*Anas aucklandica chlorotis*) from a wildlife park in Christchurch. Sporulation revealed that two distinct species of *Eimeria* appeared to be involved. The first of these had small subspherical oocysts measuring 12.7 x 10.5 μm that lacked micropyles, the second had larger sized (17.6 x 15.1 μm) ovoid oocysts with very obvious micropyles (Figure 2). Eimerian coccidia are usually highly host-specific and it is likely, therefore, that both of these species are unique to brown teal.

**References**


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