Ticks on the Edible Dormouse (*Glis glis*)

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Abstract

Rodents in central Europe, such as the Edible Dormouse, are common hosts for many ectoparasites, including ticks. One of the most extensively studied tick species is *Ixodes ricinus,* whose geographic distribution extends from Scandinavia to Morocco. In 2014, a new North African species *I. inopinatus* was described and found in Morocco, Tunisia, the Iberian Peninsula, and peripherally also in Romania, Austria, and southern Germany. Both *Ixodes* species were reported in sympatry in southern Europe (Spain and Portugal) where they feed mainly on lizards. During the period from early June to October in 2016-2019, we captured 4597 dormice and calculated the rate of tick infestation. Our results show that the mean prevalence of ticks in the dormouse population was 31.9 %. In the next step, 400 ticks from 2019 (255 larvae, 144 nymphs, 1 adult) from dormice were identified morphologically and by multiplex-PCR to distinguish *I. ricinus* and *I. inopinatus*. The results of our analysis show the first report of *I. inopinatus* feeding on rodents.

Keywords

dormouse, ticks, rate of infestations, crossbreeding

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