
Ectoparasite of A "Galap" *Rhinoclemmys punctularia* (Daudin) in Trinidad, W.I.

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THE ectoparasite, *Amblyomma dissimile* is widely distributed in the forested areas of Trinidad, West Indies. It is known to parasitize a wide range of reptiles and amphibians, including snakes, large lizards (*Ameiva ameiva* and *Tupinambis nigropunctatus*), caimans and the large toad, (*Bufo marinus*) (Aitken et al, 1968).

During 1961-1962, a total of 5,870 *Amblyomma* ticks including *Amblyomma longirostre*, *A. calcaratum* and *A. dissimile* were collected in the Bush Bush Forest, Nariva Swamp, Trinidad, West Indies. All ticks collected were tested for naturally occurring viruses but no isolations were made (Jonkers et al, 1968). This paper reports the first collection of the ectoparasite, *Amblyomma dissimile*, from the fresh water turtle, *Rhinoclemmys punctularia* (Daudin), in the Guayaguayare Forest, Trinidad, West Indies.

Rhinoclemmys punctularia, formerly classified as *Geomyda punctulariola* (Fretey et al. 1977), is distributed from eastern Panama south into western Columbia and Ecuador and east through northern Columbia, Venezuela, Trinidad, Guyana, Suriname, French Guiana and the Brazilian Territory of Amapa and the state of Para. It is the only member of the genus found east of the Andes (Pritchard, 1979).

In Trinidad, *R. punctularia* is commonly referred to as the "galap." It is widely distributed and has been collected on many occasions in the Aripo Savannah (Underwood, 1963).

The galap, *R. punctularia*, was collected on the 6 April, 1981 while Insect Vector Control Division (IVCD), Ministry of Health and Environment, conducted entomological investigations in the Guayaguayare Forest. The tortoise was transported to the Caribbean Epidemiology Centre (CAREC) to be tested for viruses. A blood sample was taken and tested but no isolations were made.

This study was done as a result of reports of sick and dead

howler monkeys (*Alouatta seniculus*) and porcupines (*Condu prehensilis*). It should be noted that examination of the three available monkeys showed that two of the howler monkeys were shot while the third was chopped on the head by the game hunter. The two porcupines, on the other hand, were in a state of almost total decomposition. Specimens were collected but could not be processed for virus isolation owing to the decayed state of the animals.

We wish to thank Dr. E.S. Tikasingh, Entomologist/Parasitologist from the Caribbean Epidemiology Centre for assisting in the identification of the ectoparasite. In addition we thank the laboratory and field staff of IVCD for their assistance. The specimens of *Amblyomma dissimile* are lodged in the reference collection at the Caribbean Epidemiology Centre, P.O. Box 164, Port of Spain, Trinidad, West Indies. In addition, we thank Dr. R. Paul, Specialist Medical Officer, Insect Vector Control Division for her support and advice during part of this study.

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