



double-pored tapeworm

Dipylidium caninum

Kingdom: Animalia
Division/Phylum: Platyhelminthes
Class: Cestoda
Order:
Family:

FEATURES

The double-pored tapeworm is a parasite of the coyote, fox, dog, bobcat and cat. This worm may attain a length of four to 20 inches. Its scolex has four suckers and three or four rows of hooks. The proglottid is shaped like a cucumber seed and has two genital pores, one on each side. Eggs are in packets of up to 30. The intermediate hosts are fleas and lice of dogs and cats.

BEHAVIORS

The double-pored tapeworm may be found statewide in Illinois wherever its hosts live. It has a complex life cycle. This tapeworm produces egg-filled proglottids which detach singly or in groups from the strobila (main body of the tapeworm) while the worm is attached to the intestine of its host. The proglottids of this worm may exit the host's anus through their own movements, or they may be expelled in the host's feces. Once outside the body of the host, the proglottid disintegrates, releasing the eggs. Eggs must be eaten by flea or lice larvae in order to continue development. The eggs hatch in the intestine of the flea or lice larvae where they continue to develop. The flea or louse containing the larvae must be eaten by a host (dog or cat family member) to be infective. When that happens,

the tapeworm developmental stages are released and may mature in the intestine, starting the cycle again. This worm rarely affects the host to any great degree. It may cause anal irritation or intestinal disorders if the host is heavily infected. The double-pored tapeworm has been observed to infect humans, mostly children.

HABITATS

- bottomland forests
- coniferous forest
- southern Illinois lowlands
- upland deciduous forest

ILLINOIS STATUS

- common
- endangered
- threatened
- native
- exotic

ILLINOIS RANGE

Permanent resident: statewide

Summer resident:

Migrant:

Winter resident:

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Illinois Department of Natural Resources. 1999.
Biodiversity of Illinois, Volume 2: Woodland Habitats CD-ROM.