



arrowheaded worm

Toxascaris spp.

Kingdom: Animalia
Division/Phylum: Nematoda
Class:
Order:
Family:

FEATURES

The arrowheaded worm is a parasitic roundworm of the small intestine of the coyote and fox. The male worm may attain a length of up to two and three-fourths inches while the female is up to four inches long. The body of this worm is long, unsegmented and cylindrical. It is tapered at the ends. The light-colored eggs are oval and have a smooth outer membrane.

BEHAVIORS

The arrowheaded worm may be found statewide in Illinois wherever its hosts, coyotes and foxes, live. Its eggs are passed out of the host's intestines with the host's feces. The larvae become infective inside the egg. Eggs may be ingested by a host directly or ingested by a mouse (intermediate host). If an infected mouse is eaten by the host, the larvae are passed on to the host. The larvae enter the stomach or intestinal wall of the host and remain there for about two weeks. Then they move to the small intestine and mature.

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.