



hookworm

Ancylostoma spp.

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

FEATURES

The hookworm is a roundworm parasite of the small intestine of the raccoon, fox and coyote. It has a cylindrical body. The male is about one-half inch long while the female is about one-half to three-fourths inch in length. The anterior end of the worm is bent upward. Three pairs of teeth are present on the edge of the mouth area. The ovoid eggs are thin-shelled. The female produces 7,000 to 28,000 eggs per day.

BEHAVIORS

The hookworm may be found statewide in Illinois wherever its hosts live. The adult hookworm lives in the small intestine of the host. Its eggs are passed out of the host's body with the host's feces. Under favorable conditions, the larva can hatch from the egg within 24 to 48 hours. The infective larval stage is reached within a week. This stage forms a cyst and can survive in the ground for several weeks. Hookworms infect their host through the skin or digestive tract. If through the skin, the larvae enter the lymph or blood and travel to the lungs. Here they enter the lungs, move to the epiglottis and are swallowed. They molt and reach maturity in the intestine. One to two months after infection, female hookworms begin producing eggs. If the infection is through

the digestive tract, the hookworms go through the intestinal wall to the blood, then the liver, the heart and the lungs. At this point they enter the lungs and are coughed up by the host and swallowed. Hookworms affect young animals more than older ones. They feed on blood and cause the host to have anemia and infections. Young animals may be infected before birth if their mother is infected.

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.