

FURTHER OBSERVATIONS ON TICKS AT
ISLAND BEACH STATE PARK BIRD BANDING STATION

By Robert Snetsinger and Dorothy Bordner¹

Snetsinger and Bordner (1966) reported on tick populations on birds banded during the late summer of 1965 at Island Beach State Park, Ocean County, New Jersey. The present report presents the data taken during a similar period of collecting in 1966. The birds were collected in mist nets and searched for ticks as in 1965. The collection dates were August 24 to September 21 for the 1965 season and September 3 to September 24 for the 1966 season. A total of 1176 birds were checked for ticks during 1966, and 12.9% of these birds were infested with one or more ticks.

The species of birds from which ticks were collected during 1966 were:

Song Sparrow	AOU 581
Swamp Sparrow	" 584
Lincoln's Sparrow	" 583
Rufous-sided Towhee	" 587
Black-throated Blue Warbler	" 654
Blackpoll Warbler	" 661
Palm Warbler	" 672
Ovenbird	" 674
Northern Waterthrush	" 675
Mourning Warbler	" 679
Yellow-throat	" 681
Yellow-breasted Chat	" 683
Wilson's Warbler	" 685
Canada Warbler	" 686
American Redstart	" 687
Catbird	" 704
Brown Thrasher	" 705
House Wren	" 721
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	" 749
Veery	" 756
Gray-cheeked Thrush	" 757
Swainson's Thrush	" 758

In the 1965 season ticks were taken from 15 species, and during 1966 from 22 species of birds. Ten species of birds were common to both seasons.

Table 1 shows a comparison of tick collections for both seasons. A greater number of birds and a greater number of species of birds were sam-

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pled during 1966; however, the number of ticks per bird was down from the previous year. Haemaphysalis leporis-palustris (Packard, 1869) represented 97.9% of the ticks collected in 1966 and 99.9% in 1965. In both years, Ixodes dentatus (Marx, 1899) was the only other species collected. The ratio of unfed to engorged and the ratio of larvae to nymphs were fairly constant for both years.

The information obtained during the 1966 season confirms the results obtained during 1965, i.e. birds associated with the lower strata of vegetation tend to be infested with great numbers of larval and nymphal ticks that are normally associated with rabbits, particularly as adult ticks. There was an indication that the number of ticks was down slightly from 1965.

Much needs to be explained about the relationships between ticks and their hosts.

Reference

Snetsinger, Robert, and Dorothy Bordner, 1966. Heavy Tick Population on Birds at Island Beach State Park. EBBA News 29(4): 159-160.

TABLE 1 - Comparison of tick collections from birds banded during two fall migrations at Island Beach State Park, New Jersey

	<u>1965</u>	<u>1966</u>
Total number of birds from which ticks were collected	92	103
Number of species of birds from which ticks were collected	15	22
Total number of ticks collected	1323	1052
Average number of ticks per bird	14.8	10.2
Number of <u>H. leporis-palustris</u>		
a. unfed larvae	564	424
b. engorged larvae	723	576
c. unfed nymphs	13	8
d. engorged nymphs	22	22
e. total	1322	1030
Number of <u>I. dentatus</u>	1	22
Record number of ticks per bird	65	64