

winter tick *Dermacentor albipictus*

Kingdom: Animalia

Phylum: Arthropoda

Class: Arachnida

Order: Ixodida

Family: Ixodidae

ILLINOIS STATUS common, native

FEATURES

Ticks have four pairs of legs (total of eight legs) in their adult form. The larval form of a tick has six legs. Winter ticks are about one-fourth inch in length, unfed. Females may be as long as three-fourths inch after feeding. The adult female has red-brown coloration with a white spot on the back, directly behind the head. The adult male is a dark brown color with a white crosshatch pattern on the back.

BEHAVIORS

Winter ticks may be found in large numbers on white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*). They also feed on other large mammals like cows and horses. This species attaches to the host as a larva and remains attached throughout its life. Although capable of carrying diseases of large, wild mammals, it is not known to transmit diseases to humans. Local health departments and the Illinois Department of Public Health (217-782-2016 or <http://dph.illinois.gov/>) can provide more information about ticks and the diseases that they can carry.

HABITATS

Aquatic Habitats

bottomland forests; marshes; peatlands; swamps; wet prairies and fens

Woodland Habitats

bottomland forests; coniferous forests; southern Illinois lowlands; upland deciduous forests

Prairie and Edge Habitats

black soil prairie; dolomite prairie; edge; gravel prairie; hill prairie; sand prairie; shrub prairie

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