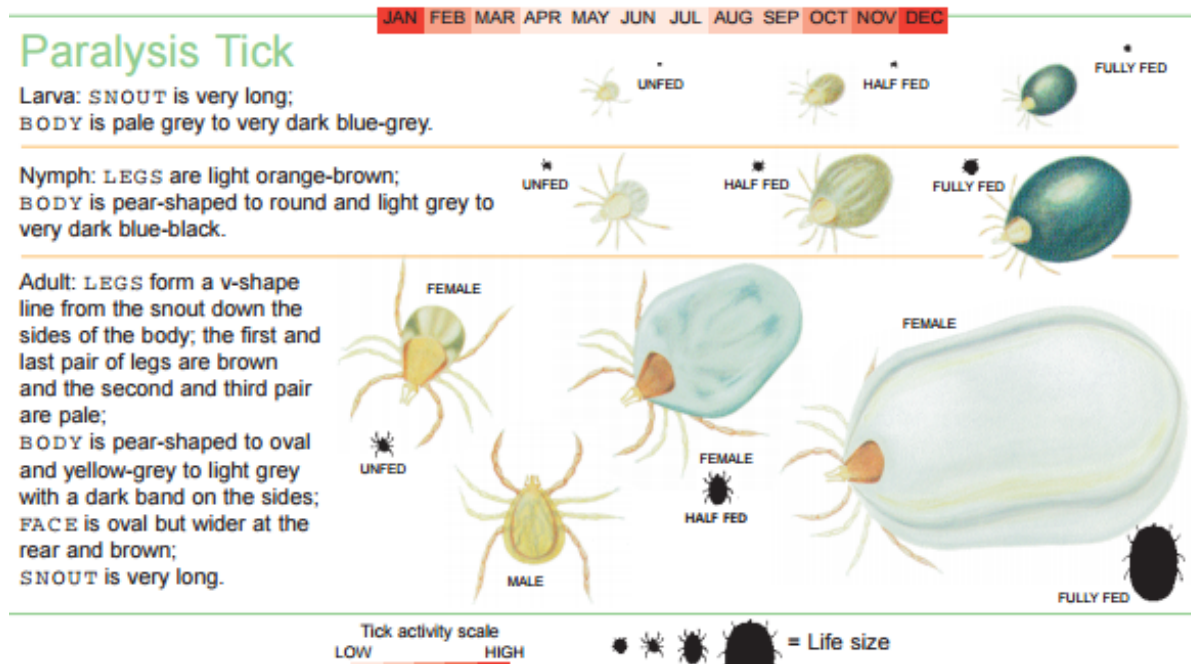


TICKS, CARERS AND WILDLIFE

This warmer Spring 2016 weather is indicating we are in for an horrific tick season. A rehabilitator in FAWNA's Southern region was concerned on a Sunday evening for a post-release Red-necked Wallaby female with breathing difficulties caused by a pulmonary oedema. It was with some relief that the likely culprit was found - a paralysis tick *Ixodes holocyclus*- and quickly removed from the Wallaby, Evie's, jaw area. Thanks to the speedy intervention by Taree Vet Stuart Knox on Sunday evening with a dose of the tick antiserum Evie seems to be rallying.

Teri Bellamy in Wildlife proceedings 233 writes: *Ticks are common and generally cause no problem, however the paralysis tick can cause signs in some joeys on first exposure. Removal of the tick is usually sufficient to allow recovery.*

As wildlife rehabilitators, conscious of the doctrine to "do no harm", we need to do all we can to ensure our young wildlife charges get the opportunity to be exposed to ticks as young as possible. We place them in an artificial environment and must do what we can to ameliorate attendant problems. In the wild the pouch young receive some immunity to ticks via their mother's milk, and by exposure to bites from ticks that are found on the mother. This diagram is the three stage life cycle of the paralysis tick, and you will see all stages represented in a photo at the bottom of this article.



Acknowledged to: http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0013/160321/paralysis-ticks.pdf

The paralysis tick is usually found on the animal's body from the shoulders towards the head, and commonly in the ears and around the jaw line, eyes, snout and back of the neck. They can be difficult to remove and often leave a crater-like hole surrounded by fur loss on the animal.

It is common for macropod rehabilitators in particular, to get ticks on themselves, transferred when bottle feeding an animal in their laps. Care must be taken to regularly check yourself for ticks, and immediately remove any found. Rehabilitators need to be aware that there are a number of tick-borne diseases that can be quite debilitating to humans and they should take precautionary measures to protect themselves.



This photo shows all stages of the paralysis ticks removed from a post-release Red-necked Wallaby during September 2016 on NSW's mid-north coast west of Port Macquarie. The rehabilitator had removed a similar number of ticks from the same wallaby the day before. *Photo Meredith Ryan*



Two ticks of the species *ixodes holocyclus*, picked off koalas in the Koala Hospital in Port Macquarie, NSW. The small tick had not yet started feeding, while the other had probably been at work for a couple of days. The amount of blood inside the larger tick is probably around 5 millilitres. *Photo Koala Hospital*

Who is itching as they read this?

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