

The tick fauna of the New Zealand subregion: Recent additions, misidentifications and associated gaps in our knowledge.

Scott Hardwick *¹, Allen Heath ²

¹ AgResearch, Lincoln

² AgResearch, Wallaceville

The New Zealand tick fauna (Acarina: Ixodidae, Argasidae) is currently in a state of flux through additions and a misidentification. Two recent findings of *Ixodes amersoni* Kohls, 1966 and description of a *Carios* sp. (Argasidae) from the New Zealand lesser short-tailed bat (*Mystacina tuberculata* Grey, 1843) brings the number of tick species in the New Zealand subregion to eleven. *Ixodes amersoni* is represented by two females collected from the Kermadec Island group. Little is known about the biology of this tick and all other life stages are yet to be described. Similarly little is known about the biology of a newly described soft tick, *Carios* sp. with formal publication of the description due later this year. This tick has been collected in the North Island on only two occasions. The scarcity of knowledge of the behaviour and biology of both *I. amersoni* and the new bat tick is not surprising given the isolation of the former and difficulty in accessing and relative rarity of hosts for the latter. Another member of the fauna, *I. jacksoni* Hoogstraal, 1967, previously considered rare may actually be more common than was once thought. Specimens have previously been misidentified as *I. uriae*, a very similar species. Further collecting and our enhanced ability to recognize *I. jacksoni* confirms its only known host to be the spotted cormorant (*Stictocarbo punctatus punctatus* Sparrman, 1786) which furthermore has a widespread distribution. Filling these knowledge gaps is important to our understanding of the biodiversity of the New Zealand fauna.

