1. PaDIL Species Factsheet

Scientific Name:
*Ornithonyssus bursa* (Berlese)
(Arachnida: Acari: Macronyssidae)

Common Name
Tropical fowl mite

Image Library
Australian Biosecurity

Partners for Australian Biosecurity image library

- Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment
- Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development, Western Australia
- Plant Health Australia
- Museums Victoria
2. Species Information

2.1. Details

**Specimen Contact:** Museum Victoria - duscoverycentre@museum.vic.gov.au

**Author:** Walker, K.

**Citation:** Walker, K. (2009) Tropical fowl mite (*Ornithonyssus bursa*) Updated on 7/21/2021 Available online: PaDIL - http://www.padil.gov.au

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2.2. URL


2.3. Facets

**Status:** Exotic Species Occurrence in Australia

**Group:** Non-insects

**Commodity Overview:** Medical & Veterinary

**Commodity Type:** Animal

**Distribution:** USA and Canada, Central and South America, Africa, South and South-East Asia, Australasian - Oceanian, Cosmopolitan

2.4. Other Names

*Leiognathus bursa* Berlese (1888)

*Liponyssus bursa* Hirst (1916)

2.5. Diagnostic Notes

This genus and species of mite are most often encountered in human dwelling when birds have nested in the roof cavity. The mites feed on the adult and and nestling birds. Once the birds have left the nest, the lack of carbon dioxide and body warmth causes the mites to leave the nest and enter the home seeking a blood meal. They will "taste" human blood but cannot survive on human blood.

Mites can live only for about 10 days away from the bird hosts. The "taste biting" can cause irritation with rashes and intense itching which may result in secondary infections. To avoid these mites, look for nesting birds around the eaves of buildings. Remove nests and discourage birds from nesting in or on building.

The diagnostic difference between *Ornithonyssus* and *Dermanyssus* is based on the position of the anal opening on the anal plate.

*Ornithonyssus:* Opening is at the front of the anal plate; the chelicerae are much stouter than in *Dermanyssus*

*Dermanyssus:* Opening is at the rear of the anal plate; the chelicerae are much less stout than in *Ornithonyssus*

There are 3 common species of *Ornithonyssus*. They are difficult to separated but can be distinguished as follows:

Northern fowl mite (*O. sylviarum*): This species has only 2 pairs of setae on the sternal plate; setae on the dorsal shield are shorter than those on adjoining integument; dorsal shield extends almost entire length of dorsal surface.

Tropical fowl mite (*O. bursa*): This species has 3 pairs of setae on the sternal plate; setae on the dorsal shield
are shorter than those on adjoining integument; dorsal shield extends almost entire length of dorsal surface. Tropical rat mite (O. bacoti): This species has 3 pairs of setae on the sternal plate; setae on the dorsal shield are of a similar length to those on adjoining integument; dorsal shield extends at most 2/3 length of dorsal surface.

2.6. Web Links

Featured Creatures: [http://www.entnemdept.ufl.edu/creatures/livestock/tropical_fowl_mite.htm](http://www.entnemdept.ufl.edu/creatures/livestock/tropical_fowl_mite.htm)

3. Diagnostic Images

Victoria: Melbourne 2009 det. K. Walker
Anal plate: Ken Walker Museums Victoria

Victoria: Melbourne 2009 det. K. Walker
Dorsal view - female: Ken Walker Museums Victoria

Victoria: Melbourne 2009 det. K. Walker
Fore coxae - female: Ken Walker Museums Victoria

Victoria: Melbourne 2009 det. K. Walker
Head front - female: Ken Walker Museums Victoria

Victoria: Melbourne 2009 det. K. Walker
Sternal plate: Ken Walker Museums Victoria

Victoria: Melbourne 2009 det. K. Walker
Ventral view: Ken Walker Museums Victoria
4. Other Images

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