

Do we have ticks in Alaska?

Alaska is home to six different *native* ticks that have historically been found in the state. They generally feed on squirrels, rabbits, and birds. However, it is not uncommon to find these ticks feeding on dogs, cats, or sometimes, people.

New types of tick have recently been found in Alaska. These ticks are called *non-native* or *invasive* ticks because they have not historically been found in Alaska. The Alaska Office of the State Veterinarian, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, and researchers at the University of Alaska are tracking these non-native ticks by field sampling and through public tick submissions.

What does a tick look like?

There are many different types of ticks, and they often look similar to the naked eye. Additionally, ticks go through three life stages (larva, nymph, and adult), and they look slightly different at each stage. Ticks are also very small. Adult ticks are about the size of an apple seed, nymphs are about the size of a poppy seed, and larva are the size of a grain of sand. Finally, when ticks feed, they swell with blood, which can also make them difficult to recognize.

You can find pictures of ticks and tips on safe tick removal at: <https://dec.alaska.gov/eh/vet/ticks>

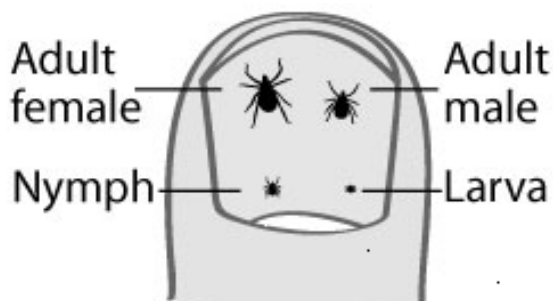


Photo credit: Lyme Disease Action [<https://www.lymesection.org.uk/about-ticks/>]

What is the Alaska Submit-A-Tick Program?

If you find a tick on yourself, your family, pets, wildlife, or in the environment, you can submit it for identification. If you include your contact information on the submission form, you will receive the identification results.

Tick submissions are included in a long-term database of ticks found in the state. This information is used to track the spread of ticks in Alaska.

For more information about the Alaska Submit-A-Tick program and to download a submission form, please visit: <http://dec.alaska.gov/eh/vet/ticks>



What can YOU do?

- Familiarize yourself with images of ticks so that you can identify them on animals and people
- Practice checking yourself and your pets for ticks
- Keep pets away from stray dogs and wildlife
- Look for ticks on your body after spending time outdoors in grassy or wooded areas
- Check wildlife for ticks when hiking, trapping, or hunting
- Send any ticks you find to the **Alaska Submit-A-Tick Program**

Did you spot a moose without hair?

It could be a sign of the winter tick. This tick has been found on wildlife in the Yukon. It multiplies rapidly on moose and can cause anemia (blood loss) and hair loss. If you see a moose with



Photo credit: Susan C. Morse [<https://northernwoodlands.org/articles/article/ghost-moose-winter-ticks-take-their-toll#prettyPhoto>]

hair loss, note the location, take a photo if possible, and immediately contact Dr. Kimberlee Beckmen (kimberlee.beckmen@alaska.gov) or your local ADFG office.

Questions? Contact the project team at alaskaticks@alaska.edu