

# Some Common Wildlife Parasites and Diseases

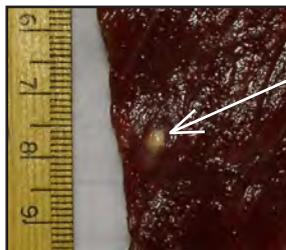
Below are some common parasites you might find in your game meat – and what you should do to prevent disease.

**Never eat raw game meat. Always cook game meat thoroughly to prevent disease.** Toxoplasmosis, for example, is caused by a parasite which cannot be seen but may be present in the meat of any mammal. Cooking meat thoroughly eliminates all risk from disease or parasites.

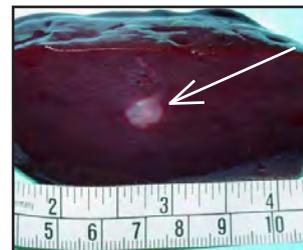
## Tapeworm cysts in muscle and liver– *No known risk to humans*

Tapeworm cysts are common and different types are found in the muscle and liver of ruminants, including moose, caribou, deer, etc. Dogs and other carnivores can get the adult tapeworm if they eat raw meat with the cysts, but people cannot.

**Prevention:** Do not feed uncooked meat or organs to dogs.



Tapeworm cysts in moose meat.



Tapeworm cysts in moose liver.

## Tapeworm cysts in lungs - *No risk to humans*

People cannot get this directly from moose, caribou or deer.

People can become infected if the lung cysts are fed to dogs and people swallow the tiny eggs from surfaces contaminated by canine feces. One type, *Echinococcus granulosus*, can affect wolves, coyotes, and dogs that eat moose, deer or caribou with lung cysts. Another, *Echinococcus multilocularis*, can affect fox that eat rodents with cysts.

**Prevention:**

- Wear gloves when skinning fox, wolf and coyote
- Don't allow dogs to eat rodents or feed on gut piles
- De-worm dogs with Praziquantal-Droncit
- Wash hands/gloves that have potential fecal contamination



Tapeworm cysts in moose lungs.

## Legworm – *No risk to humans*

This roundworm, *Onchocerca cervidpedis*, is found in moose and caribou. This is a white worm up to eight inches long under the skin of the legs or brisket. This does not affect humans; edibility of meat is not affected.

**Prevention:** No prevention necessary.

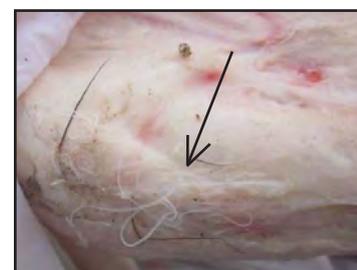
## Trichinosis – *High risk to humans*

This roundworm, *Trichinella nativa*, occurs most commonly in the muscle of bears, lynx and walrus. It cannot be seen so all bear, walrus and lynx meat should be treated as if infected. People can get sick by eating under-cooked meat.



**Prevention:** Always cook bear, lynx and walrus meat to an

internal temperature of at least 160°F to be safe. Freezing, smoking, drying, salting or microwaving do not kill this parasite.



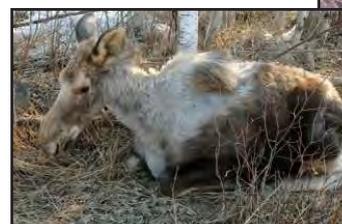
Legworms under the skin of a moose leg.

## Under Surveillance

### Moose Winter Tick – *No risk to humans, high risk to moose*

Hair loss in a triangle pattern on the neck is a sign of moose winter tick. This parasite is present in B.C. and the Yukon but has not been detected in Alaska, yet. ADF&G is concerned and conducting surveillance for moose winter tick.

**Action:** Please report any ticks, lice, fleas (except ticks from squirrels and lice from wolves) to [dfg.dwc.vet@alaska.gov](mailto:dfg.dwc.vet@alaska.gov) to help biologists control this parasite.



Moose with winter tick showing hair loss from scratching.



Feeding ticks.

### Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) – *No risk to humans, high risk to deer, elk and moose*

CWD is a disease which causes a degeneration of the brain in deer, elk and moose. Humans are not susceptible. To date, CWD has NOT been detected in any Alaskan wildlife. However, ADF&G is conducting active surveillance to detect or prevent introduction of the disease in free ranging wildlife in Alaska. Elsewhere, infected deer species show signs including extreme weight loss, excessive salivation, stumbling and tremors.

**Action:** Please report deer, elk, moose or caribou showing any signs of the disease to the nearest ADF&G office.

For more information on wildlife disease, visit [www.adfg.alaska.gov](http://www.adfg.alaska.gov) –search for “Parasites and Diseases.” To submit a wildlife disease report, e-mail [dfg.dwc.vet@alaska.gov](mailto:dfg.dwc.vet@alaska.gov).