Records of ticks (Acari, Ixodidae) from the Faroe Islands

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Jaenson, T.G.T. & Jensen, J-K. 2007. Records of ticks (Acari, Ixodidae) from the Faroe Islands. Norw. J. Entomol. 54, 11-15.

New data are given on the tick fauna of The Faroe Islands. So far, three species of *Ixodes* are recorded from the islands. *I. uriae* from *Fratercula arctica, Uria algae* and *Rattus norvegicus*; *I. caledonicus* from *Fulmarus glacialis*; and *I. ricinus* from *Homo sapiens, Felis catus, Canis familiaris, Phylloscopus collybita* and *Oenanthe oenanthe*. The possible regular presence of *I. ricinus* on the archipelago is likely to increase the risk for transmission of tick-borne zoonotic pathogens, including *Borrelia garinii*, to humans.

Key words: Faroe Islands, ticks, *Ixodes ricinus*, *Ixodes caledonicus, Ixodes uriae, Borrelia*

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INTRODUCTION

Ticks (Acari, Ixodidae) are of primary importance as blood-feeding ectoparasites and as vectors of disease agents of terrestrial vertebrates and are ranked second to mosquitoes as the medically most important group of arthropods. The geographical distribution of tick species in Northern Europe was summarized in Table 2 in Jaenson et al. (1994) where records for the Faroe Islands were incorporated into those for Denmark. The Faroe Islands (Map 1) is an isolated archipelago, consisting of 18 islands in the North Atlantic about 300 km north of the Shetland Islands. On the Faroe Islands a Lyme disease cycle seems to occur (Gylfe et al. 1999). It appears to involve the human-pathogenic spirochaete *Borrelia garinii*, the tick vector *Ixodes uriae* (White) and puffins, *Fratercula arctica*, as vertebrate reservoir with occasional transfer and infection of people with *B. garinii*. In this paper new records of *I. uriae*, *I. ricinus* and *I. caledonicus* from the Faroe islands are presented together with a discussion of the potential epidemiological significance of the ticks.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

To our knowledge, there has been no systematic survey of ticks on the Faroe Islands. The present study includes occasional records based on materials sent to and studied by the present authors as well as previously published occasional records. Species diagnoses under "our records" are based on descriptions and keys in Arthur (1963), Filippova (1977) and Hillyard (1996), and the nomenclature follows that of Barker & Murrell (2004).