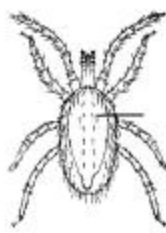


RAT AND FOWL MITES



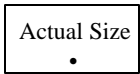
Ornithonyssus bacoti
Tropical Rat Mite



Ornithonyssus sylviarum
Northern Fowl Mite



Ornithonyssus bursa
Tropical Fowl Mite



MITE ECOLOGY (After Webb & Bennett, 2002)¹

The tropical rat mite (*Ornithonyssus bacoti*) is a parasite of roof rats (*Rattus rattus*) and Norway rats (*Rattus norvegicus*), which are commensal rodent species found in association with human industry and living accommodations worldwide. Many collection records are known of *O. bacoti* from a wide variety of mammals including numerous ones from sylvan rodents and also a few from sciurid species, rabbits, skunks, and foxes. Usually associated with birds, a small number of records have been listed of *O. sylviarum* from mammals including bats, squirrels and mice. *Ornithonyssus bursa* has rarely been recorded from hosts other than birds.

Ornithonyssus sylviarum occurs throughout the temperate regions of the world and is typically found on domestic fowl with many records also known from many wild bird species. Recovery of northern fowl mites from buildings is often correlated with infested bird nests constructed in the eaves of the building.

The tropical fowl mite (*O. bursa*) is distributed throughout the warmer regions of the world and is associated mainly with poultry, pigeons, and sparrows.

Adult northern fowl mites (*O. sylviarum*) spend most of their lives on the avian host, whereas some of the adults and the other life stages are found in the nesting material. The life stages of *O. bacoti* and *O. bursa* predominantly inhabit the nests of their hosts with intermittent feeding forays made by the nymphs and adults.

CONTROL

Bird nests should be removed from under eaves or other places of contact with the house, preferably after the young have been reared, and the infested areas sprayed with an insecticide. Insecticides listed for tropical rat mite control are usually effective.

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In the event that purchased pesticides are ineffective in controlling the mites, it is recommended that you contact a professional entomologist who specializes in the control of insects, mites, and other arthropod pests. Entomologists with this expertise are employed by the local agricultural commissioner or a reputable pest control company. Insecticides may be purchased at nurseries, hardware, farm supply, and pet stores.

¹Webb, J. P. and S. G. Bennett. 2002. Mites. Pp. 155-170 in *Arthropods of Public Health Significance in California* (R. P. Meyer and M. B. Madon, eds.). Mosq. Vector Contr. Assoc. Calif. 201 pp.

