CHELYDRA SERPENTINA (Common Snapping Turtle) and EMYDOIDEA BLANDINGII (Blanding's Turtle). PARASITES.


Turtles were collected by hand or dip-net at the Carroll College field station located in Genesee Depot, Waukesha Co., and at a pond in Wauwatosa, Milwaukee Co. Live-caught turtles were in-
pected for leeches, measured, and released. All leeches were placed in individual vials and relaxed by slowly dripping 95% ethanol into the vial, they were then fixed in 10% formalin. Leeches were identified using a stereo microscope and keys provided by Klemm (1991, Michigan Acad. 24:37–103) and Sawyer (1972, Illinois Biol. Monogr. 46:1–54). Prevalence is the percentage of infected turtles in a sample; mean intensity is the mean number of worms per infected turtle. In addition, three road-killed specimens (two C. serpentina, one E. blandingii) were collected in Waukesha and Racine Counties, Wisconsin, during 1995–1998. These turtles were inspected for helminth parasites, and were collected within 24 h of death. Upon necropsy, the digestive tract and internal organs were examined for endoparasites for both C. serpentina specimens examined. Only the digestive tract was examined from the single E. blandingii necropsied because all other organs were badly damaged. All nematodes were fixed in 10% formalin, dehydrated in 70% ethanol, cleared in glycerol, and identified as temporary mounts according to the descriptions of Hedrick (1935a, Trans. Amer. Microsc. Soc. 54:307–335, 1935b, J. Parasit. 21:397–409) and Baker (1986, Can. J. Zool. 64:228–237). Voucher specimens were deposited in the Harold W. Manter Laboratory, University of Nebraska State Museum, Lincoln (accession no. Placobdella parasitica HWML 15008, Placobdella ornata HWML 15009, Falcaustra wardi HWML 15010, Spiroxyx contortus HWML 15011).

Among the live-caught turtles, five (71%) of seven C. serpentina examined were infected with Placobdella, with a mean intensity of 21.2 ± 44. Most turtles contained 1–2 P. parasitica and/or P. ornata with the exception of one immature turtle that contained one adult and 99 young P. parasitica. A total of four E. blandingii were collected on seven different occasions. A single P. ornata or P. parasitica was recovered on three out of seven different dates with an intensity of one. A single E. blandingii male (carapace length 200 mm) contained one P. ornata on 10 June 1998 and one P. parasitica when recaptured on 14 June 1998. In total, 103 P. parasitica and three P. ornata were recovered from C. serpentina, and one P. parasitica and two P. ornata were recovered from E. blandingii. All leeches were attached to the ventral surface of the carapace and/or the limbs of the turtles.

Among the road-killed turtles, one immature C. serpentina (100 mm carapace length (CL), 172.4 g) was negative for helminths while an adult male (280 mm CL, 3991.6 g) contained four male and five female Falcaustra wardi in the large intestine. Gulford (op. cit.) previously reported Spironura affine (=Falcaustra affinis, Baker 1986 op. cit.) in Wisconsin snapping turtles. Falcaustra wardi is a common parasite of C. serpentina (see Baker 1986 op. cit.). However, Wisconsin is a new locality record for this nematode. The road killed female E. blandingii (210 mm CL, not weighed because of damage) contained four Spiroxyx contortus nematodes in the stomach, which previously have been reported by Gulford (op. cit.) from the northeastern part of the state.

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