Ancylostomosis in Captive Indian Fox Cubs in Puducherry

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The Indian fox (*Vulpes bengalensis*) a pretty, slender limbed, small and slim animal; distinctive in the black tip to its tail. It is distributed throughout India from the foothills of the Himalayas to Cape Comorin (Prater, 1998). Data on endoparasites of captive Indian fox cubs are scanty. The present paper reports on the occurrence of *Ancylostoma caninum* infection in 5 months old wild-caught Indian fox cubs from Union Territory of Puducherry.

During September 2006, three Indian fox cubs of approximately 4 months old were caught by the Department of Forests and Wildlife, Puducherry. The cubs were transported to the Department and maintained in run. Age of the cubs was estimated by history from the recovery site and dentition: the cubs were fed chicken meat. After 1 month of capture, faecal samples were obtained from each cub. Feces were examined for eggs of parasites by the flotation technique.

Two of three cubs were found to be infected with *Ancylostoma caninum*. Two of the fox cubs had diarrhea and tarry in nature, Davidson *et al.* (1992) reported *Ancylostoma caninum* infections in red foxes, gray foxes and coyotes from commercial sources selling to fox-chasing enclosures. Dalimi *et al.* (2006) detected *Ancylostoma caninum* parasites in 22 red foxes collected from western part of Iran. Perusal of literature revealed that Ancylostomosis in Indian foxes are scanty.

Since Ancylostomosis was believed to have been severely pathogenic to cubs in captivity, this report of Ancylostomosis in 2 of 3 wild caught cubs may have significance. Ancylostomosis occurs frequently in summer and especially in animals that are confined on a relatively small area of moist ground like dogs in kennels as foxes in runs (Soulsby, 1982). Hasslinger *et al*. (1992) detected *Ancylostoma caninum* in a fox kept in zoological gardens of Giza, Egypt and Munich, Germany. Any ecological situation such as moist ground of the run has the potential to greatly intensify the degree of parasitism. To sum up, maintenance of all the 3 cubs in the same ground of the run has greatly intensified the degree of parasitism and might have resulted in transmission among cubs.

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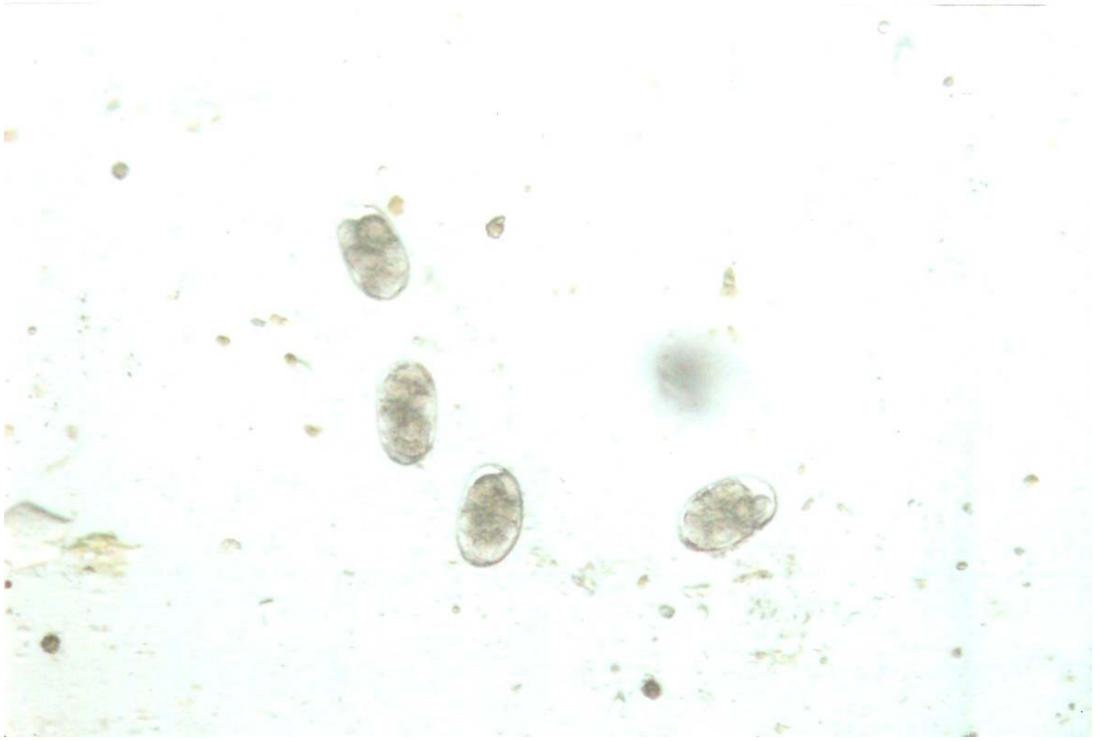

Image 1. Photograph showing eggs of *Ancylostoma caninum* (10 X)