

Guidance

Tick species profiles

There are 20 tick species found in the UK, many of which are specialist parasites of wildlife. Below is a list of the different tick species found in the UK, as well as some that are imported.

From: **[UK Health Security Agency \(/government/organisations/uk-health-security-agency\)](#)** and **[Centre for Climate and Health Security \(/government/organisations/the-centre-for-climate-health-security\)](#)**

Published: 6 March 2025

Contents

- Native species profiles
- Imported species profiles

Native species profiles

***Ixodes acuminatus* (southern rodent tick)**

- Inhabits burrows of small rodents, with records primarily from southern England (including the Scillies, Cornwall and Devon)

***Ixodes apronophorus* (marsh tick)**

- Prefers wetland habitats, where it parasitizes water vole and, historically, coypu
- Records have been reported in Kent, the Norfolk Broads and Wicken Fen

Ixodes arboricola (tree-hole tick)

- Favours tree-hole nesting birds such as Great Tit and Blue Tit
- Historical records predominantly from England with a few records from Wales and one site in Scotland

Ixodes canisuga (fox/badger tick)

- Widely distributed throughout the UK
- Commonly found on badgers, foxes and domestic dogs

Ixodes frontalis (passerine tick)

- Solely an ectoparasite of birds, particularly passerines which pick up the ticks during ground-feeding under roosts
- Responsible for avian tick-related haemorrhagic syndrome
- Historical records restricted to England, but newer records show presence in Wales
- Sometimes found feeding on humans

Ixodes hexagonus (hedgehog tick)

- A ubiquitous tick of hedgehogs
- Can be a significant parasite of companion animals, and was responsible for human infestations in war-time Anderson shelters where hedgehogs also sought refuge
- Surveillance records show increasing incidence of bites on humans today

Ixodes lividus (sand martin tick)

- A species which occurs solely on sand martins, remaining in its colonies over winter
- Predominantly found in England

Ixodes ricinus (sheep or deer tick)

- The most abundant and widespread species of tick found in the UK

- Parasitizes many wild and domestic animals including humans
- *Ixodes ricinus* is the main vector of several pathogens in the UK, including *Borrelia burgdorferi* s.l., *Anaplasma*, *Babesia*, tick-borne encephalitis virus and louping ill virus

***Ixodes rothschildi* (puffin tick)**

- Infests burrow-nesting coastal birds such as puffins
- Historical records limited to south-west England and west Wales

***Ixodes unicavatus* (cormorant tick)**

- Distributed across the UK and associated only with populations of cormorants and shags

***Ixodes ventalloi* (rabbit tick)**

- A rare species in the UK
- Infests rabbits and several of its predators
- Also found feeding on humans
- Found on offshore islands

***Ixodes vespertilionis* (long-legged bat tick)**

- Solely parasitizes bats, particularly horseshoe-bats
- Easily distinguishable due to its long legs
- Records are reported from England, Scotland and Wales

***Ixodes uriae* (seabird tick)**

- Parasitises seabirds and is ubiquitous from Shetland to Cornwall
- Also found feeding on humans

***Ixodes trianguliceps* (shrew tick)**

- Widely distributed across the UK
- Solely an ectoparasite of burrowing small mammals infesting their nests

***Ixodes caledonicus* (northern bird tick)**

- Solely an ectoparasite of birds, particularly those which nest on cliffs and buildings, including pigeons and corvids
- Records restricted to northern England and Scotland

***Dermacentor reticulatus* (ornate cow tick)**

- Mostly restricted to Wales and the south-west of England
- Recently found to have established in Essex
- Mainly parasitizes birds, sheep, cattle and occasionally humans and their companion animals
- Easily distinguishable due to its ornate scutum

***Haemaphysalis punctata* (red sheep tick)**

- Mostly restricted to the south-east of England, with some records in south Wales
- Predominantly an ectoparasite of sheep, however, immature frequently parasitize passerine birds
- Can also be found feeding on humans

***Carios maritimus* (marine argasid)**

- Parasitizes seabirds; ostensibly a tropical species and in the UK has been recorded only from offshore islands of west Wales

***Argas reflexus* (pigeon tick)**

- Associated with long-standing populations of Domestic Pigeon, with records almost exclusively from Canterbury Cathedral, Rochester Castle and King's College, Cambridge

***Argas vespertilionis* (Blyborough tick)**

- Hemispherical in shape and widely distributed on vespertilionis bats, with most records from pipistrelles

Imported species profiles

Rhipicephalus sanguineus (brown dog tick)

- A tick species with a global distribution due to its ability to survive and reproduce indoors (even when the outdoor climate is not suitable)
- Predominantly an ectoparasite of domestic dogs with only occasional attachment to humans
- All records in the UK have been linked to importation of either dogs or goods (furniture)
- There is no evidence to currently support its establishment in the UK, however it is a species of concern for the future

Figure 1: Rhipicephalus sanguineus (brown dog tick)



Figure 2: Rhipicephalus sanguineus on a dog



Hyalomma marginatum

A tick species which can transmit Crimean Congo Haemorrhagic fever virus. This tick species is common on livestock in the Mediterranean Region, Eastern Europe and parts of Africa.

Most importations of this tick species are immatures collected from migratory birds at landfall sites. Several adult males have been detected on hosts in the UK, who have not travelled abroad. This suggests that some ticks that enter the country on migratory birds as immatures, develop into adult stages during very hot summers and look for hosts to feed on.

There is no evidence to currently support its establishment in the UK.

Figure 3: *Hyalomma marginatum*



Main resources for tick species profiles:

- [Information on native and imported ticks \(https://www.gov.uk/guidance/information-on-native-ticks\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/information-on-native-ticks)

Published 6 March 2025



OGL

All content is available under the [Open Government Licence v3.0](#), except where otherwise stated



© Crown copyright