

Kangaroo Ticks at Whiteman Park - FAQ

What are they?

The Kangaroo Tick (*Amblyomma triguttatum*) is a parasite which lives pretty much anywhere you find kangaroo's in the wild.

The adult tick has eight legs, and looks superficially like a spider. These ticks normally dine on the blood of kangaroos, hence the name. Unfortunately, some humans smell sufficiently like kangaroos to confuse the poor hungry little things! (Ok, I'm just being sarcastic now.) But it does seem that, like mosquitoes, ticks will target some unlucky human individuals while ignoring others. It's also possible that ticks avoid people who use insect repellent.



Pretty much anywhere you find kangaroos and native animals in the West Australian bush you will find kangaroo ticks.

Are they dangerous?

Unlike ticks found elsewhere in Australia and the world, these ticks are not typically harmful to people, aside from a small inflammation following removal, similar to that of a mosquito bite.

When do they appear?

Kangaroo ticks seem to reach their adult size around the end of the year, just in time to lay eggs and start hatching out pepper-ticks for summer and autumn.

The first of them start to appear towards the end of September as baby's and grow through the summer period.

They are more prevalent in the summer months, and at WA Gun Club, will be found in greater numbers when venturing in the bushy parts of the grounds.

The adults are reddish-brown with yellow joints, and some have yellow marks on the back. In winter, ticks are sluggish and not as prevalent, which is another reason for they are not seen.

How do ticks attach themselves?

Ticks have very sharp mouthparts, perfect for drilling through skin into blood capillaries lying just under the surface.

Ticks do not "jump" down from overhanging branches. At best, they can climb up to your head and drop down from there, which may give that impression. Ticks do clamber around on the ground, and they do climb up low vegetation.

How do I remove a tick if I get one?

There are many ways of removing ticks once they have started feeding, but I haven't found any method to be 100% effective in all cases.

It is important that the entire tick including head and mouthparts are not left in the wound. Application of methylated spirits or Vaseline on the ticks' body can either suffocate the tick or make the tick withdraw after a few hours.

Remove ticks with pointy tweezers as soon as possible.

To remove a tick:

- Use fine pointed tweezers to grasp the tick as close to the skin as possible.
- With steady force, gently pull the tick out.
- Apply an antiseptic solution to the bitten area after removal.

If you have difficulty removing the tick or suffer any symptoms after removal, seek medical attention

The YouTube video here demonstrates this method.

If any mouthparts remain then they must be removed and the wound disinfected.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1Na6_CORwTE – Real life video example.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0wotB38WrRY> – Animated example.

Preventing tick bites.

The following precautions can help prevent you from being bitten by a tick.

- Wear clothes that fully cover your arms and legs.
- Tuck your trousers into your socks.
- Wear a wide-brimmed hat.
- Apply insect repellent that contains DEET to clothes, hats and skin.
- Avoid bushy areas of the club grounds.
- Shower and check for ticks soon after being in areas known to have ticks.

What is WA Gun Club doing to minimise tick activity?

Whilst it is virtually impossible to eliminate the ticks in Whiteman park, the club has undertaken to spray the general areas most commonly used by members and visitors to help reduce the risk of tick bites.

Further information

If you are concerned about ticks, contact:

- your Medical Practitioner
- the Poisons Information Centre: 13 11 26
- your local council Environmental Health Officer
- your state or territory health department

Whiteman Park Visitors FAQ's

<http://www.whitemanpark.com.au/visitor-info/frequently-asked-questions/>

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