



## **THE OCCURRENCE OF DRACUNULUS INSIGNIS (LEIDY, 1858) CHANDLER, 1942 IN A SKUNK FROM ONTARIO, CANADA**

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Source: Journal of Wildlife Diseases, 6(1) : 71

Published By: Wildlife Disease Association

URL: <https://doi.org/10.7589/0090-3558-6.1.71>

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**THE OCCURRENCE OF DRACUNULUS INSIGNIS (LEIDY, 1858)  
CHANDLER, 1942 IN A SKUNK FROM ONTARIO, CANADA**

There have been numerous reports of guinea worm infection in wild carnivores in North America (see Ewing and Hibbs, 1966, Amer. Midl. Nat. 76: 515-519 for a review of reported infections). However, only one such record lists *Dracunculus* sp. from a Canadian host; Chitwood (1933, J. Amer. Med. Assoc. 100: 802-804) reporting the occurrence in a raccoon from Ontario.

Over a period of six years, we have examined numerous wild carnivores: i.e. raccoons, foxes, mink, and various weasels. In particular, approximately 125 striped skunks, *Mephitis mephitis* have been skinned in connection with various projects. It is only recently that we have found a single gravid female nematode indistinguishable from those described by Chandler (1942, J. Parasitol. 28: 255-268; Amer. J. Trop. Med. 22: 153-157)

as *Dracunculus insignis* (Leidy, 1858). Our specimen was found loosely coiled in the subcutaneous tissue of the front leg of a skunk from Peterborough, Ontario. From the number of skunks examined, both from Ontario and Quebec, and the single finding of this nematode, it would appear that *D. insignis* is not common in skunks in this part of North America. This is in agreement with other observations since *D. insignis* has been reported from North American skunks only three times previously; in *Mephitis nigra* from New York (Cheatum and Cook, 1948, Cornell Vet. 38: 421-423); in *Mephitis mephitis* from Minnesota (Erickson, 1946, Amer. Midl. Nat. 36: 494-509) and Nebraska (Ewing and Hibbs, 1966, Amer. Midl. Nat. 76: 515-519).

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August 6, 1969