



Eimeria fitzgeraldi n. sp. FROM THE NORTHERN POCKET GOPHER, *Thomomys talpoides* 1

Author: TODD, K. S.

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***Eimeria fitzgeraldi* n. sp. FROM THE
NORTHERN POCKET GOPHER, *Thomomys talpoides*[†]**

From June through August, 1969, fecal samples from 65 northern pocket gophers, *Thomomys talpoides*, were collected in Park County, Wyoming, for parasitologic examination. A description of the population and trapping area was given by Tryon and Cunningham (1968, J. Mammal. 49: 699-705). Fecal pellets from the colon were placed in 2.5% potassium dichromate solution and mail-

ed to Urbana. A single fecal pellet was examined from each sample with the aid of Sheather's sugar solution and a Zeiss Standard GFL microscope with 10X eyepieces and a 100X apochromatic objective. Three of the samples contained large numbers of sporulated or partially sporulated oocysts which are herein described as a new species. One hundred oocysts and sporocysts were measured.

***Eimeria fitzgeraldi* n. sp.**

Description

The oocysts were ellipsoidal to ovoid and often slightly asymmetrical and flattened at one end (Fig. 1). The oocyst wall was about 1.5-2.0 μ thick and composed of two layers; the outer layer was brown, slightly rough and made up about $\frac{3}{4}$ of the total wall thickness. The inner layer was colorless. There was a slight thinning of the oocyst wall at the flat end, but a distinct micropyle was not present. A wrinkled membrane was present at the thin end of the oocyst. Oocysts were 24-33 μ x 18-24 μ (mean 28.3 \pm 1.9 x 22.0 \pm 1.3), and the length to width ratio was 1.06-1.72 (mean 1.29). A polar granule, which had an irregular shape, was present, but an oocyst residuum was absent.

The sporocysts were ovoid and had a distinct Stieda body. Sporocysts were 13-16 μ x 6-10 μ (mean 14.1 x 8.3 μ) and had a length to width ratio of 1.61-2.20 (mean 1.73). A granular sporocyst residuum was present, usually as a compact mass filling most of the sporocyst, but was sometimes elongate and situated between the sporozoites. A thin membrane surrounded the sporocyst residuum.

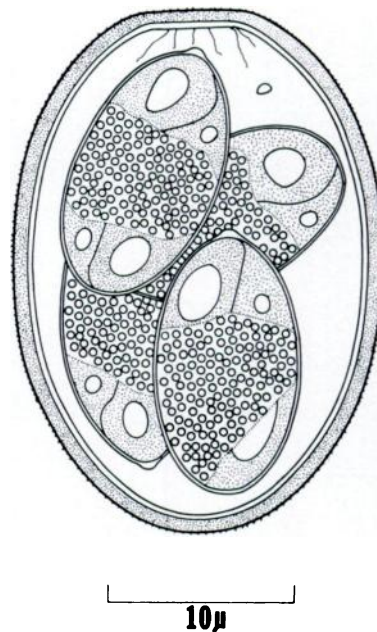


FIGURE 1. Sporulated oocyst of
Eimeria fitzgeraldi, n. sp.

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The sporozoites lay lengthwise in the sporocysts. A large posterior refractile body and a small anterior refractile body were present in each sporozoite.

Type Host: Northern pocket gopher, *Thomomys talpoides*.

Location: Beartooth Mountains, Park County, Wyoming.

Incidence: Oocysts were present in fecal samples from 2 of 10 juvenile males and 1 of 31 adult females. No oocysts were found in samples from 14 adult males or 10 juvenile females.

Remarks: Two other species of *Eimeria* have been described from the family Geomyidae. *Eimeria geomydis* Skidmore, 1929 was described from a single pocket

gopher *Geomys bursarius* from Nebraska, and *E. thomomysis* Levine, Ivens and Kruidenier, 1957 was found in 2 of 5 *Thomomys bottae* from Arizona. The average sizes of these species were 13.3 x 12.5 μ and 14.2 x 13.9 μ , respectively, which is considerably smaller than *E. fitzgeraldi* n. sp. Also, *Eimeria thomomysis* does not have a polar granule, and only a few scattered granules of sporocyst residuum are present; *Eimeria geomydis* lacks a polar granule and Stieda body, and a micropyle is occasionally present.

The species is named for Dr. Paul R. Fitzgerald, College of Veterinary Medicine, University of Illinois, Urbana.

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K. S. TODD, Jr.

*College of Veterinary Medicine
University of Illinois
Urbana, Illinois*

and

C. A. TRYON, Jr.

*Pymatuning Laboratory of Ecology
University of Pittsburgh
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania*