

BC Moose Winter Tick Surveillance Program

The 2018 BC Moose Winter Tick Surveillance Program is excited to be getting started again and looking forward to seeing results from the 2018 season. Last year was another successful year and they received 330 submissions, check out the latest report on the website. This year they are looking to do even better. They are asking for your help to spread the word about this program and encourage people to document and share their moose observations with us. We welcome you to share the message below on websites, social media platforms and/or in newsletters, as well as the poster.

For those of you who are new to the program, the information below outlines what this program is all about:

The BC Wildlife Health Program is looking for help from wildlife professionals, wildlife enthusiasts and the general public with observations of hair loss caused by “Winter Ticks” on moose throughout the province. The Moose Winter Tick Surveillance Program wants to collect observations to monitor the number of animals with hair loss and the amount of hair loss on each animal to estimate winter tick prevalence and distribution. This program occurs on an annual basis. Winter ticks are a significant parasite for moose populations and can contribute to moose declines in parts of their range, including BC. So, it is an important health factor to monitor, particularly with climate change and alterations to moose habitat. The findings of the surveillance program will contribute to the Provincial Moose Research Program, which was initiated in 2013 to investigate factors influencing moose populations in BC. This is the fourth year of the program; last year they received 330 reports of moose from across the province.

Winter tick infestations can be observed on moose during January through April. The ticks spend the entire winter on one moose and there can be as many as tens of thousands on one individual. As the female ticks become adults they feed on blood in late winter and the irritation causes moose to scratch and groom themselves excessively, resulting in hair loss. The extent of the hair loss is a rough indicator of how many ticks are present and can be observed easily from a distance. They know that tick infestations can result in behavioral changes or direct health impacts that may reduce moose survival.

They hope that you may be interested in contributing to this surveillance program by recording your observations **of both healthy and infested moose** during the winter and spring.

IMPORTANT – HOW TO SUBMIT A SURVEY:

There are several methods of documenting moose winter tick observations. Please choose the methods that are most convenient for you.

- 1) An online survey. Simply go to <http://www.gov.bc.ca/wildlifehealth/mooseticksurvey> and click on “Complete the online form” on the right side of the page.
- 2) An electronic .PDF version of the moose winter tick survey that can be filled in on your computer and returned via email. Please find the survey attached to this email or you can download the form from the website above.
- 3) An electronic .PDF version of the moose winter tick survey that can be filled in on your mobile device and/or tablet. Please download the free Acrobat Reader App for iOS, Android, Blackberry and Windows devices. On your mobile device, please download the survey attached to this email or from

the website above and open the survey using Adobe Acrobat Reader.

Please return all completed surveys to: FLNRMooseTickSurvey@gov.bc.ca

If you would prefer to receive paper hard-copies of the survey, please email us with your mailing address and we will send surveys to you promptly.

If at any time you find yourself having trouble with downloading, using or sending the survey form, or even for general questions, please feel free to contact us using the contact information below.

It would be great if you could carry this survey with you while you are out in the field this winter/spring when tick infestations become visible. **Please document all moose observations, from January 1, 2018 to April 30, 2018, regardless of hair loss or not.** Also, it would be appreciated if you could distribute this email to anyone who will be spending time in the field this winter/spring

COMING SOON: A mobile phone and tablet application for easy and convenient submission of moose surveys. Stay tuned.

Your participation is greatly appreciated!

Sincerely,

Courtney Jones
Program coordinator

For more information, or to receive a survey, please contact them at:

Phone: 250-787-3283

Email: FLNRMooseTickSurvey@gov.bc.ca

Website: www.gov.bc.ca/wildlifehealth/mooseticksurvey