

# Mites

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Since some time more and more aviaries have to deal with mites. Recently a breeder in Belgium lost nearly half of his aviary by a new species of mite. More on this later.

## Different types

1. Most famous is the **red mite or Dermanyssus gallinae** an ectoparasite in poultry. The mites attack at night resting birds and feed on their blood. They hide in cracks far away from daylight where they mate and lay eggs. In a proper environment within seven days the life cycle is completed and we have a sort of explosion of mites. In that way they can be a very serious problem. It also caused irritation and stress to our birds especially among Young birds.



## The Life Cycle of Red Mite



- A blood feed takes 1 to 2 hours.
- After feeding a female red mite crawls into a crack or crevice to mate and lay eggs.
  - During mild weather, eggs hatch and the larvae emerge in 2 or 3 days.
    - 24 hours later, larvae change into 8 legged protonymphs.
    - The protonymphs change into deutonymphs 24 to 36 hours later.
- They start to feed and become adult red mites. The females start to lay eggs again and the cycle is repeated.  
The complete cycle takes about 7 days to complete.

### What to use on your birds ?

There are many chemicals available such as Ardap (Quiko), Beaphar 404, Ivermectine and many more.

**Be careful with insecticides (harmful to children and animals and yourself !)**

You can also use Dutchy's they are predatory from the family Laelapidae mites and live in Europe free in nature. They hunt the hole day behind them and kill the red mites. They are not harmful for the birds.

You can order them at the firm Refona in the Netherlands.



Mite booster  
from Refona

**2. Ornithonyssus bursa or Black aphids** is just like the red mite a mite. This ectoparasite lives only on the outside of its host. He comes from the tropics and is probably imported with equipment delivered at our region. We only find him in spring and early summer. This suggests that he is mainly targeting the nestlings and not adults. Few nestlings survive an attack. Temperature plays a role in the development of this mite. They are not shy of light so we can see them during the day. This mite is also capable of transferring diseases. He also provides irritation in humans. An adult black louse is about 0,5 mm tall and have 8 feet. They are beige in colour and have a drawing on the body. Depending on the temperature the eggs hatch after 1 or 2 days.

#### What to use on your birds ?

Same treatment as in red mites.

**3. Northern Fowl mite or Ornithonyssus sylvarium** is related at the black aphids and caused a lot of trouble in my country among bird breeders. In one case the man lost half his aviary nearly 300 birds. The mite is about 0,8 mm and as adult red to black. You cannot see the difference in appearance with a normal blood mite. Often they live together. The development rate of the Northern Fowl mite is a lot bigger and so much faster that it cause very quick a lot of damage. Northern fowl mites can transmit various diseases by using a "stylus" through the skin into the bloodstream.

#### What to use on your birds ?

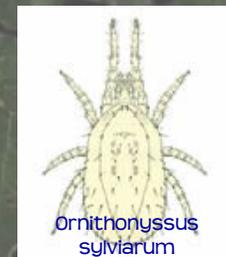
There is no adequate treatment for the moment so we have to use the same products as indicated above with the other mites. Research is going on and we have to wait for the results.



Dermanyssus gallinae



Ornithonyssus bursa



Ornithonyssus sylvarium