COMMON ADULT TICKS OF BUTTE COUNTY, CALIFORNIA

This key has been prepared by Butte County Mosquito & Vector Control District to provide the public information concerning local ticks and the diseases they may transmit. Adult ticks depicted are the most commonly encountered by residents of Butte County. While not intended to be a definitive key, the following photos and brief descriptions may be useful in determining the potential risk of disease transmission. It is recommended that those ticks which have bitten a person be identified by a professional.

Western Black-legged tick, *Ixodes pacificus*

- **FEMALE**
- **MALE**

This species (including both sexes) is the most commonly encountered *Ixodid* tick in our area. Adults become active after the first series of fall rains, remaining active through early summer. The mouthparts are longer than most other tick species commonly found in Butte County. Black-legged ticks do not have eyes. Females have a small, red-brown body and black legs. The male is smaller than the female, and a dark brownish color. **Diseases:** Tick paralysis in dogs, spotted-fever group rickettsia, primary vector of Lyme disease in the western United States, equine ehrlichia and human ehrlichiosis.

Brown Dog Tick, *Rhipicephalus sanguineus*

- **FEMALE**
- **MALE**

In the U.S., the Brown Dog Tick is almost exclusively a parasite of dogs, only rarely attacking man. Common around residential areas on the valley floor. A parasite of dogs in kennel situations, or where tick control is not practiced. This tick can be identified by its dark color, and hexagonal head. Adults are very hardy, often surviving without food for up to 568 days. Adult ticks have been collected during every month of the year, but are most common during the late spring and summer months. **Diseases:** Implicated...
vector of canine ehrlichia, Babesia canis, which causes canine jaundice.

American Dog Tick, *Dermacentor variabilis*

**FEMALE**

These large-bodied adult ticks are marked with a cream-white pattern over a red-brown base color. The whitish pattern extends the full length of the body on males(1), while only covering half of the females(2). Eyes are apparent(3), and mouthparts are short(4). Exhibits widespread feeding on dogs, man, and many wild large mammals. In Butte County, adults have been collected throughout the year, the majority being collected March through July. **Diseases:** The most important vector of rickettsia causing Rocky Mountain spotted fever, tularemia, and has been implicated in the transmission of human ehrlichiosis.

Pacific Coast Tick, *Dermacentor occidentalis*

**FEMALE**

This tick is wide-spread in Butte County, active during fall through early summer. Adults tend to have a silverish-brown pattern on the back of the body and legs(1). Males have a red “measled” pattern on the back of the body(2). Females have a light pattern extending over half of the body. Mouthparts are fairly short(3), and eyes are apparent(4). Adults will commonly attack cattle, horses, deer and man. **Diseases:**
Associated with transmission of bovine anaplasmosis, Colorado tick fever virus, rickettsia of Q fever, and tularemia.