

Macroparasite

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Macroparasites are parasites that are large enough to be seen with the naked eye, in contrast to microparasites. They grow in one host but reproduce by infective stages outside this host. These generally include ticks, mites, helminths (nematodes, flatworms, etc.), and can be either external parasites (ectoparasitic) or internal parasites (endoparasitic). The most abundant macroparasite in humans is the nematode *Ascaris lumbricoides* which causes an infection called ascariasis. Macroparasites are also parasitic of many plant species and can be a significant agricultural pest.



Tick

Beyond parasitology

A different distinction between micro- and macroparasites was made by historian William Hardy McNeill in his 1976 book *Plagues and Peoples*. Macroparasites are defined by McNeill to be infections used to attack and exploit susceptible neighbouring peoples in a form of epidemiological warfare. The parasitological definition of macroparasite is based on parasite life cycles rather than the human politics of biological warfare.

See also

- Ecology
- Epidemiology
- Microparasite
- Parasitism

References

- McNeill, W.H. (1976). *Plagues and Peoples*. Garden City, NY: Anchor Press/Doubleday. ISBN 0-385-12122-9.

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