Wild Tiger Health Centre Information Sheet

Disease threat: Toxocara cati (mystax)

Hazard description: A nematode of the small intestine in the Superfamily Ascaridoidea (Taylor *et al.* 2007).

Host species: Felids domestic (Taylor *et al*. 2007) and wild. *T. cati* has been isolated from free-ranging wild felids (González *et al*. 2007; Ramesh *et al*. 2008), including Amur tiger and Amur leopard in the Russian Far East (Zheleznova *et al.* 2012), and Bengal tiger in the Indian Sundarban Tiger Reserve (Bhattacharya *et al.* 2012). It is commonly reported from captive tigers (eg: Deshmukh *et al.* 2009; Mahali *et al.* 2010).

Pathogenesis: Often found as a mixed infection with *Toxascaris leonina*. The life cycle is indirect: rodents are important as intermediate hosts carrying the L2 stages. Trans-mammary infection from dam to kitten is also important. Unthriftiness may be observed in the young. Following L2 ingestion by the final felid host larvae may migrate through the liver and/or lungs. The parasite is a rare and still disputed (Otranto *et al.* 2015) cause of visceral larva migrans (ocular disease) in man (Taylor *et al*. 2007).

Diagnosis: Thick-shelled eggs in faeces.

Free-ranging tiger occurrence: Reported from Amur tiger in the Russian Far East (Zheleznova *et al.* 2012) and Bengal tigers in the Indian Sundarban Tiger Reserve (Bhattacharya *et al.* 2012) and Kalagarh Tiger Reserve (Nigam *et al.* 2016). Also identified from tiger scats in Thailand (Patton & Rabinowitz, 1994).

Distribution: Worldwide (Taylor *et al.* 2007).

Assumptions: None.

Limitations: None.