

D-44 A study on seasonality and abundance of fleas *Siphonaptera: Pulicidae* on domestic cats

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Seasonality and abundance of fleas on domestic cats were studied at Batagalla village, Kandy District, from January to December 1996.

A 20% sample from 96 domestic cats was checked for fleas once a month. Fleas were combed from the head and body of cats, preserved in 70% alcohol and were identified to species. Meteorological data was collected from the nearest weather station. Two species of fleas namely *Ctenocephalides felis* (cat flea) and *Ctenocephalides canis* (dog flea) were found. Overall, 64% of sampled cats were infested. The cat flea (168/244) was encountered more frequently than the dog flea (74/244). Male: female ratios were 1:3.8 for *C. felis* and 1:5.7 for *C. canis*. *Ctenocephalides felis* was abundant from January to June and *C. canis* from July - December; their abundance trends were negatively correlated (Spearman's $r = -0.63$, $p = 0.03$). The abundance of *C. canis* was positively correlated with rainfall ($r = 0.97$, $p < 0.001$) and humidity ($r = 0.78$, $p < 0.003$), but not with temperature ($r = -0.22$, $p = 0.50$).

Ctenocephalides felis abundance was uncorrelated with meteorological factors. The co-occurrence of the 2 flea species on cats may be due to the co-habitation of their primary hosts.