

# Newsroom

July 11, 2019

Georgia Southern University

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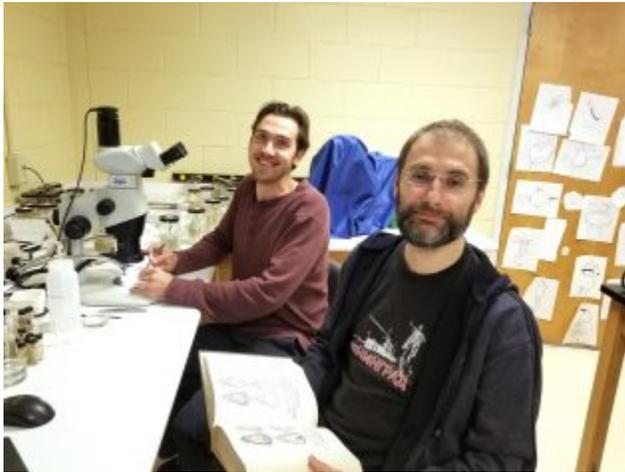
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# Georgia Southern graduate student identifies two new species of African ticks

July 11, 2019

Save

While most people tend to avoid ticks, Jackson Tomlinson, a graduate student in the Department of Biology finds them fascinating and beautiful. His interest in the parasites was recently rewarded with the discovery of two species of ticks that are entirely new to science.



1 Jackson Tomlinson, left, worked with Dmitry Apanaskevich, Ph.D., on his thesis project, which led to the discovery of two new species of African ticks.

Tomlinson, who works under the supervision of Dmitry Apanaskevich, Ph.D., in the James H. Oliver Jr., Institute for Coastal Plain Science, discovered the species as a part of his master's thesis.

"It seems surreal that my research at Georgia Southern is coming to an end," Tomlinson said. "To have such a productive experience as a master's student is something I will always appreciate, and working with (Dr. Apanaskevich), one of the world's leading experts in tick taxonomy, has been nothing short of invaluable and truly a pleasure."

Both new species are found throughout tropical Africa and feed on small meat-eating animals, such as mongooses, wild and domestic cats and dogs, hedgehogs, and rodents.

Tomlinson's manuscript, complete with species descriptions and magnified photographs, was recently published in *Systematic*

*Parasitology*, a world-renowned scientific journal focusing on the fields of systematics and taxonomy.

Tomlinson's thesis was devoted to clearing up confusion surrounding a group of African ticks that historically have been very difficult to identify and describe. Based on the extensive collections stored in the Smithsonian Institution's U.S. National Tick Collection that is housed in the Institute for Coastal Plain Science on the Statesboro Campus, Tomlinson was able to look at thousands of ticks and identify characteristics common to some groups and not others.

The collection of ticks is one of the largest of its kind, and each year dozens of scientists from around the world come to Georgia Southern to study the unique specimens the collection has to offer.

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