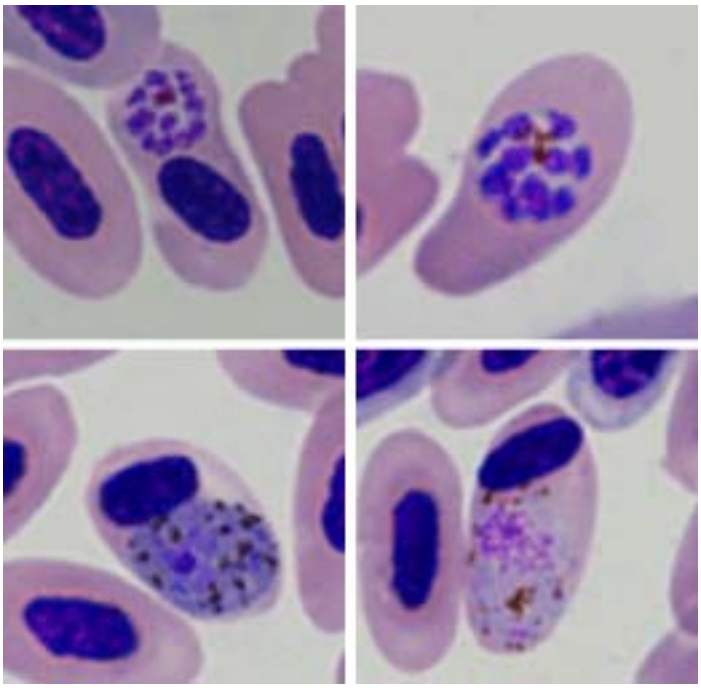
Plasmodium (Haemamoeba) relictum (Grassi and Feletti,1891)

Typical blood stages:



Important diagnostic characters of blood stages:

Young trophozoites usually markedly displace the nuclei of infected erythrocytes and deform the erythrocytes. Fully-grown erythrocytic meronts and gametocytes occupy more than half of the cytoplasmic space in the infected erythrocytes but do not occupy all available cytoplasmic space in the erythrocytes. The number of merozoites in erythrocytic meronts markedly varies in different strains (from 6 to 32) but is more often between 10 and 24. Pigment granules in gametocytes are roundish, sometimes oval, usually randomly scattered throughout the cytoplasm. Large (>1 μm in diameter) vacuoles are absent either in exoerythrocytic or erythrocytic meronts. The length of fully-grown gametocytes does not exceed 10 μm. Periodicity of erythrocytic merogony is between 30 to 36 h. Passerine birds are good hosts.

Mitochondrial cytochrome b sequences:

GRW04, GRW11, LZFUS01, SGS1

Avian hosts and distribution:

Type avian host – *Passer hispaniolensis*.

Additional hosts are numerous species of birds of the orders Anseriformes, Charadriiformes, Ciconiiformes, Columbiformes, Coraciiformes, Falconiformes, Galliformes, Piciformes, Psittaciformes, Sphenisciformes, and some others but particularly of the Passeriformes (more than 310 species total).
This parasite has been recorded in all zoogeographical regions, except the Antarctic.