



preventing suffering, teaching compassion

FACT SHEET:

Deer Do Not Cause Lyme Disease

Recent scientific studies disprove the correlation between killing deer and the reduction of Lyme disease. You could kill all the deer in the state of Maryland and you would still have Lyme disease. In fact, killing deer increases the amount of food and cover available for mice, birds and other hosts, which in turn will boost tick numbers and escalate the spread of Lyme disease.

This is proven by scientific studies like Localized Deer Absence Leads To Tick Amplification (Ecology, 87(8), 2006, pp.1981-1986 2006 by the Ecological Society of America.)

Since ticks can be found on 49 bird species, all mammals including chipmunks, squirrel, voles, foxes, rabbits and mice, when deer numbers are reduced, ticks tend to congregate in higher densities on the remaining deer or switch to find alternate hosts, like you, your children, or your pets. Ticks need to be eradicated at the larval and nymph stage.

John Griffin, the head of DNR in Maryland recently wrote that "even a dramatic reduction in the deer population would do little to dampen the disease," and Douglas Hotton, leader of DNR's Deer Management Program said "deer numbers have little to do with the spread of Lyme disease." In fact, he suggested that the very name "deer tick" is misleading.

Barbara Metzler, a member of the Center for Disease Control's Lyme Disease Task Force said "the name deer tick is a misnomer to begin with" and wrote "while deer and mice can both serve as hosts on which ticks harmlessly feed, only mice can transmit the Lyme disease bacteria to ticks. The deer don't."

A Center for Disease Control researcher of the community-based Lyme Disease Intervention Study in Mendham Township and Mendham Borough stated, "We can't target the deer for Lyme."

Avoiding Lyme Disease

"It is important to realize that there is no single species of mammal associated with hosting Lyme disease. Many small mammals, as well as deer and humans can carry the bacterium. Wild plans to get rid of deer will do no good, and might even make the situation worse. The only way to avoid the disease is to remove ticks as soon as you notice them biting you, and beware because most people who develop Lyme disease in North America catch it from ticks in their own yards (which have probably never seen a deer)."

-John Blatchford, Chartered member of the Institute of Biology

P.O. Box 1403 ♦ Ellicott City, Maryland 21041 ♦ (410) 880-2488 ext. #3

<http://www.animal-advocates.org>