

Information for Ohio Deer Hunters

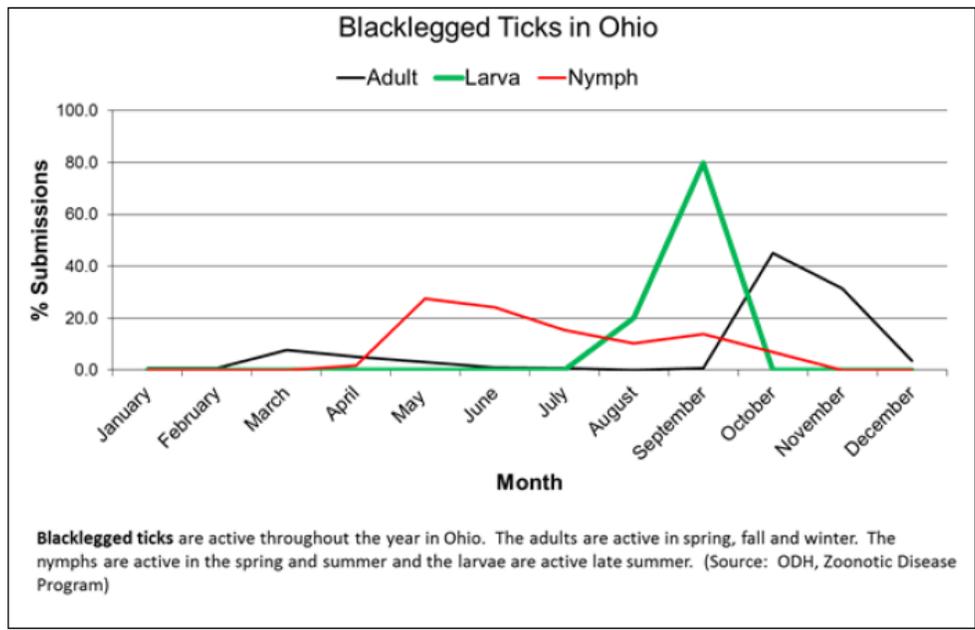
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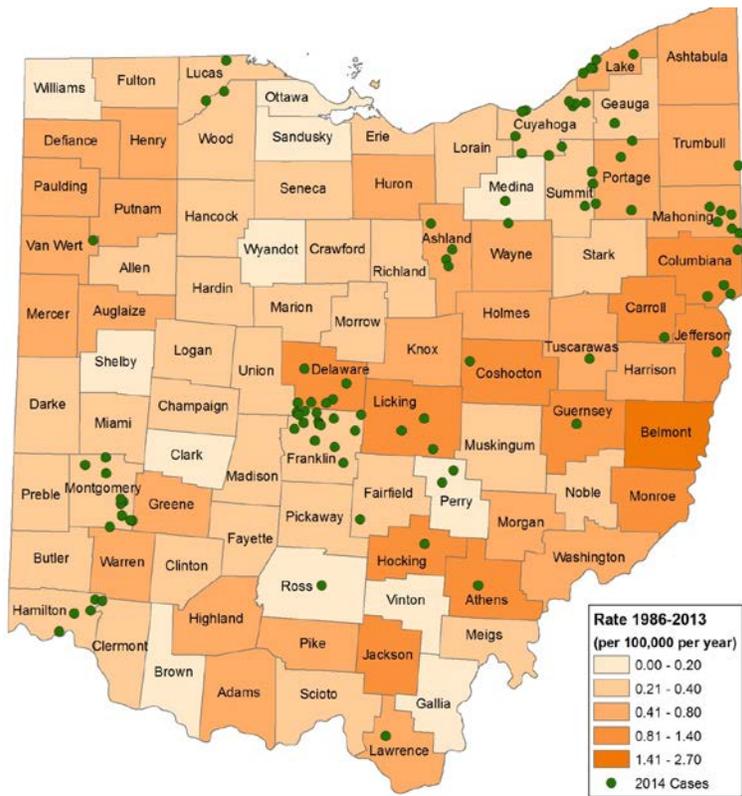
Deer hunters are at some risk of getting Lyme disease and other tick-borne diseases from the bite of a blacklegged 'deer' tick (*Ixodes scapularis*) in Ohio. There are multiple established blacklegged tick populations in the state, mostly in areas south and east of I-71 (Eastern deciduous forest). These ticks have been recorded in 60 of 88 counties and are thought to be established in at least 33. Twenty four counties are Lyme-endemic according to CDC criteria. Autumn and early winter is when this tick is the most active and hunters should be vigilant. Blacklegged ticks prefer living in wooded habitats where they feed mostly on white-footed mice as juvenile ticks and on white-tailed deer as adults (see photo below). Hunters are at risk for picking up ticks on the walk to their wooded hunting sites, while field dressing the animal, returning to their vehicle or home and skinning/processing. Ticks may remain attached to the deer for several days after being killed. Ticks that were previously feeding on deer may transmit Lyme disease in a very short time, thus it is critical to remove attached ticks as soon as they are discovered using pointy tweezers or finger and thumb (see figure). Save the tick if possible for later identification and possible testing (see 'ODNR ticks' for submission form). Lyme disease symptoms can include fever, headache, fatigue and a characteristic skin rash called erythema migrans ("bull's-eye" rash). If left untreated, infection can spread to the joints, heart and nervous system.

Tick Bite and Disease Prevention

- Assume that blacklegged ticks are in your hunting area and prepare in advance by pre-treating clothing with permethrin (0.5%) following label directions.
- Tuck shirt into pants and pants into boots to limit access of ticks to skin.
- Do frequent tick checks but especially at the end of the hunting day, paying special attention to areas of exposed skin (arms, armpits, neck and head).
- If attached ticks are found, remove using pointy tweezers or protected thumb and finger (see figure). Save the tick in case symptoms occur.
- Should symptoms occur, take the specimen to your healthcare provider so they will include Lyme disease and other tick-borne diseases in their diagnosis and treatment decision making.
- Lyme diseases tests are often negative when done very early so healthcare professionals should initiate antibiotic treatment rather than waiting for a positive blood test especially when the tick bite occurred in one of Ohio's 24 Lyme endemic counties (see last map).
<http://wildlife.ohiodnr.gov/species-and-habitats/ticks-in-ohio>
- Composting the hide may be a way of introducing ticks onto your property so inspect before composting.

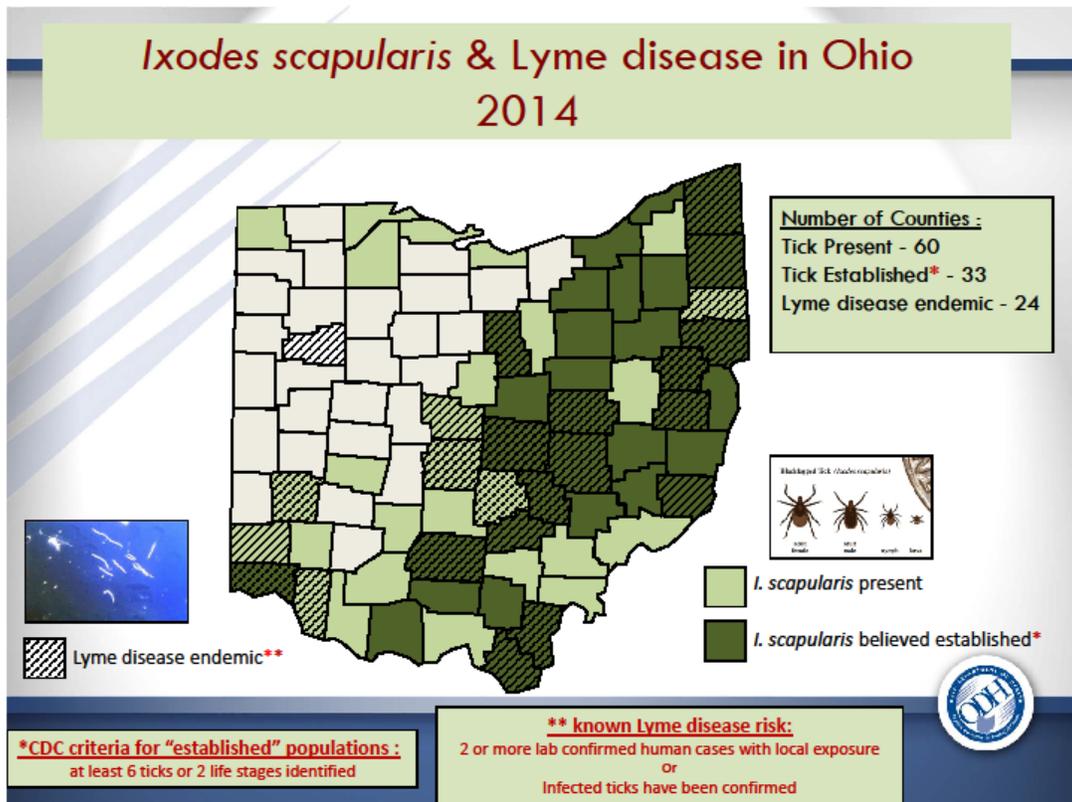


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Source: Ohio Department of Health
Data as of 11/18/2014

<http://www.odh.ohio.gov/~media/ODH/ASSETS/Files/dis/zdp/Diseases/lyme/lymemap.ashx>



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