Kentucky is swarming with deer ticks: over 50% of counties infested

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http://danielcameronmd.com/kentucky-swarming-deer-ticks-50-counties-infested/

by Daniel J. Cameron, MD, MPH

The authors collected deer ticks from 794 hunter-harvested white-tailed deer and 2 from black bears (killed by cars). An additional 6 ticks were removed from two field biologists assisting with tick collection, which took place between October 2015 and January 2017.

“We combined our data (41 new county records) with data from Eisen et al. (2016) (18 counties) [2] which indicate I. scapularis is present in at least 59 counties,” writes Lockwood.

The authors’ data demonstrates that the deer tick “occurs throughout Kentucky and is established in numerous counties where it had not been previously reported.”

Furthermore, the authors examined a select number of ticks and found 11% of them were infected with B. burgdorferi. “We detected B. burgdorferi s.s. in I. scapularis at numerous sites across Kentucky despite similar studies in Tennessee failing to detect B. burgdorferi s.s. in >800 I. scapularis tested.”

While the number of cases of Lyme disease is still low in Kentucky, it is rising. “The number of human Lyme disease cases has increased in recent years from five human cases/year … from 2006–2012 to 14.25/year … from 2013 to 2016,” Lockwood states. The authors did not, however, discuss the possibility of underreporting of Lyme disease cases.

Lockwood concludes, "public health measures are important to prevent tick-borne diseases in Kentucky.”

Related Articles:

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CDC advises doctors to consider Lyme disease in emerging states

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References:

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2. Eisen RJ, Eisen L, Beard CB. County-Scale Distribution of Ixodes scapularis and Ixodes pacificus

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