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News Release

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Blacklegged Ticks Becoming More Prevalent in Ohio

COLUMBUS – Hunters and outdoors enthusiasts should be aware of a relatively new tick in Ohio, the blacklegged “deer” tick, according to the Ohio Department of Health (ODH) in conjunction with the Ohio Department of Natural Resources’ (ODNR) Division of Wildlife.

Blacklegged ticks were once considered rare in Ohio, but the state now has likely established populations in 26 counties, most east of Interstate 71 where deciduous forests are present. These small, dark ticks are known transmitters of Lyme disease and remain active throughout the year, including the fall and winter when temperatures are above freezing. Learn more about identifying these pests at www.bit.ly/OHticks.

ODH’s website has [information and images](#) about tick identification and tick-borne diseases. Visit odh.ohio.gov to learn more. The Center for Disease Control website has further details on Lyme disease nationally at www.cdc.gov/lyme.

Unlike pets and humans, wild animals such as deer are not affected by the blacklegged tick and suffer no ill effects from Lyme disease. Additionally, Lyme disease cannot be transmitted by the consumption of venison. Hunters should remember that hunting and dressing deer may bring them into close contact with infected ticks. Be aware that composting deer hides may introduce these unwanted ticks in new areas.

Everyone, especially hunters, should be aware of this new threat and take precautions to prevent tick attachment. Outer clothing should be [sprayed with a permethrin-based repellent](#) according to label directions before hunting and allowed to thoroughly air dry. Once dry, the clothing produces no odor. Pants should be tucked into socks or boots and shirts into pants to keep ticks on the outside of clothing. These ticks are difficult to spot on camouflage clothing. All clothing should be carefully inspected for small, dark crawling ticks before entering vehicles and going indoors. Once indoors, thoroughly check for small, attached ticks.

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Remove attached ticks as soon as they are discovered to reduce the risk of contracting tick-borne diseases. For individuals to safely remove ticks from themselves, hunting dogs, or deer, people should use tweezers or their fingers protected by rubber gloves. Grasp the tick as close to the skin as possible and pull straight out with steady, even pressure. Do not use petroleum jelly, fingernail polish, alcohol, cigarettes, matches, or other similar methods to try to kill or stimulate the tick to back out. These methods do not work, delay proper removal and may be dangerous.

People should familiarize themselves with the symptoms for Lyme disease by going to www.cdc.gov/lyme. Save the tick in a baggie and note the day of removal on a calendar. If an individual seeks medical attention, bring the tick and mention the known presence of Lyme disease infected ticks in Ohio.

To learn more about ticks, visit <http://www.dnr.state.oh.us/Default.aspx?tabid=23053>.

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