

Tick Study Sites

Objectives

For the second consecutive year, the Dover Board of Health is conducting research on tick density at five outdoor recreation areas in Dover, with a sunny and shady transect at each site. Three sites are located at the Dover-Sherborn High School, one at Noanet Woodlands, and one at Caryl Park. Each site is marked with a sign identifying the area as a tick study site.

Methods

Using a dragging technique, Massachusetts Department of Public Health summer interns are assessing tick density in ten designated transects. Assisted by members of the Lyme Disease Committee, the ticks are then sent to Tufts University Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine for analysis of any bacteria found in the ticks. Information on the type of tick, life stage, number of ticks in each shady and sunny transect, and any bacteria the tick is carrying is collected and will be analyzed.



Expected Results

The anticipated result is to find that ticks are more commonly found in shady, wooded settings as opposed to the adjacent sunny transects.

Significance

Lyme disease is a serious concern in Dover and neighboring towns. The information collected from this research will assist the Board of Health in communicating pertinent information on Lyme disease prevention and awareness to the area residents and trail users. Black legged ticks (*Ixodes scapularis*), also known as deer ticks, may carry bacteria that cause Lyme disease, babesiosis or human granulocytic anaplasmosis. American dog ticks (*Dermacentor variabilis*) may carry bacteria that cause Rocky Mountain spotted fever and tularemia. As tick populations grow, it is imperative that residents are equipped with the knowledge and preventative measures to reduce the likelihood of contracting Lyme disease and other illnesses caused by tick bites.

