

Mosquitoes

In Crawford, Mercer, and Butler Counties

And Ticks

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TICKS TICKS TICKS

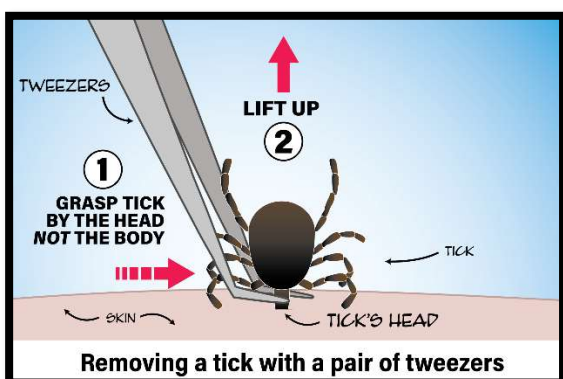
Back in force for hunting seasons.

In the time between October and December adult Deer Ticks become more active in Pennsylvania than any other time of year. Adult ticks have a higher chance of carrying Lyme disease because they've had more time to feed than their immature counterparts that are active during the summer months.

While many people have put away their outdoor gear and begun planning for next year's outdoor fun, many others are just now going into the woods, fields, and wetlands of the Pennsylvania countryside in search of wild game. With both hunters and ticks becoming active at the same time the inevitable will happen, people will encounter potentially disease carrying Deer Ticks.

It is just as important in the fall and winter to take precautions against ticks as it is during peak outdoor recreation season. The DEP and Department of Health urge hunter to use EPA approved tick repellants containing DEET or Permethrin. If concerned about scent ruining your hunt it's important to remember a downwind animal is probably going to smell you regardless of your insect repellant use, it better to be smelled than to contract a tick-borne illness.

It is always important to remember the basic tick bite prevention tactics... tuck shirts into pants and pants into boots, if a tick can't find skin it can't bite you... shower and thoroughly check your body for ticks, the sooner you find them the lower the chance of infection... immediately launder or machine dry outdoor clothing on high heat after coming indoors to destroy any hitchhikers... and always remove ticks properly and contact a doctor if illness or rash accompany a bite.



Always remove ticks properly with a pair of tweezers, not nail polish, duct tape, or other home-remedy methods.

P.s. Don't forget to protect your hunting companions as well! While Dog Ticks go inactive as temperatures drop below 50 degrees, Deer Ticks remain active well into the winter months. Consult your veterinarian and select an appropriate tick repellant for you pets!



Image taken from "the pet hospital" website article on winter protection from heartworm.

Mosquitoes Take the Holidays off,

What happens to mosquitoes over the winter...

Pennsylvania is home to approximately 62 species of mosquito that are considered residents, meaning they are here year-round. Other species are known to make appearances in the area but are mainly driven by accidental and incidental introduction either caused by human activity or the migration of wildlife such as waterfowl, but these individuals generally do not persist year to year.

Pennsylvania's resident mosquitos have three strategies for surviving the holiday season, and no, avoiding the fruitcake is not one of them. The most common way these mosquitoes survive the winter is by not surviving at all. 39 species of mosquitoes including most of our nuisance species die when the weather cools off and rely on "egg banks" to perpetuate the species. These egg banks are large numbers of eggs laid in areas that experience seasonal spiring flooding and hatch when increasing temperatures and snowmelt waters arrive. Since these mosquitoes all hatch at generally the same time, they are responsible for the "mass hatching" events that are the common cause of spring mosquito complaints.

The second method of surviving the winter is utilized by 15 species of mosquitoes and is perhaps the most troublesome from a public health perspective, overwintering as adults. This is the tactic used by the Culex mosquitoes responsible for the transmission of West Nile Virus. These mosquitoes will seek out sheltered locations such as tree holes, basements, tunnels, spring houses, caves, and sewers to ride out the low temperatures in a biological state called diapause, also known as hibernation. This is one of many factors driving yearly reoccurring West Nile Virus outbreaks as infected mosquitoes overwinter brining the virus along with them into the new year.

The third and least common over winter strategy, used by 8 species including the Melanura mosquito responsible for transmission of Eastern Equine Encephalitis, is to survive as larva. These larvae may even freeze solid during the winter as the wetlands they call home turn to ice.

As the spring thaw comes the mosquitos of Pennsylvania reemerge, ready to hit the ground running, well... flying.

Where to go

The DEP's Website

www.dep.pa.gov/Business/ProgramIntegration/Vector-Management

For more information and the mosquito reporting tool

Who to Contact

MCCD/ Vector Management

gbickel@mercercountypa.gov

-or-
(724) 301-4949



Mercer County
Conservation District