



Maine Medical Center
RESEARCH INSTITUTE
VECTOR-BORNE DISEASE LABORATORY

Islesboro Deer Tick Survey, November 12, 2010

Three members of Maine Medical Center Research Institute's Vector-borne Disease Laboratory, Charles Lubeczyk, Eleanor Lacombe, and Peter Rand, visited Islesboro on November 12th to survey for Lyme disease vector deer ticks by "flagging" vegetation. With sunshine, temperatures in the low to mid-fifties, no wind, and the adult tick season being at its peak, conditions were perfect for the survey.

Nine sites were surveyed (see map), three in the northern island, two in the isthmus, and four in the southern island. Each was flagged for 15 to 40 minutes, depending on the size of the site.

In all, 93 ticks were collected during a total of 11.25 hours of flagging, equaling 8.3 ticks per hour. Relatively high numbers of ticks were flagged near the ferry terminal (13/hr.) and on either side of the isthmus (11-14/hr), but there was great variability in tick abundance from site to site. As we have found elsewhere (1), barberry habitat was particularly productive. As time allows, collected ticks will be analyzed for the presence of the Lyme disease bacterium, and reported subsequently.

In the fall of 2009, 5.0 ticks/hr were flagged island-wide, and almost half (48.4%) were infected.

The slow, upward trend of deer-tick abundance on Islesboro appears to be continuing.

Respectfully submitted,



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1. Elias, S. P., C. B. Lubelczyk, P. W. Rand, E. H. Lacombe, M. S. Holman, and R. P. Smith, Jr. 2006. Deerbrowse resistant exotic-invasive understory: an indicator of elevated human risk of exposure to *Ixodes scapularis* (Acari: Ixodidae) in southern coastal Maine woodlands. *J. Med. Entomol.* 43: 1142-1152.