

SEASON  
2015



*Happy Holidays from TickEncounter!*



**Welcome to the TickEncounter holiday newsletter!**

In this edition:

- **Tick Forecast:** As everyone gears up for a season full of family, food, and festivities we want to make sure you're still up-to-date on the latest TickSmart™ information.
- **Spotlight on TickSpotters:** Since storytelling around the dinner table is a large part of this time of year we're also pleased to introduce you to Hal, a TickSpotter from Newark, DE who appears to have really stuck his neck out to protect his outdoor cats from ticks. Read on, you'll see!
- **TickSmart™ Tools:** We have exciting new TickSmart™ products to offer, just in time for the season of giving.

We'd also like to encourage you to kindly consider [TickEncounter](#) in your holiday generosity. Any amount is helpful and helps us continue to provide TickSmart™ information and services, like [TickSpotters](#), that has provided personalized guidance to over 10,000 people in 2015. We rely on the generosity of people like you for about 50% of our budget, so please, **click [here](#) to contribute today.**

Wishing you a Happy Thanksgiving, and wonderful holiday season ahead!



## *Tick Forecast*

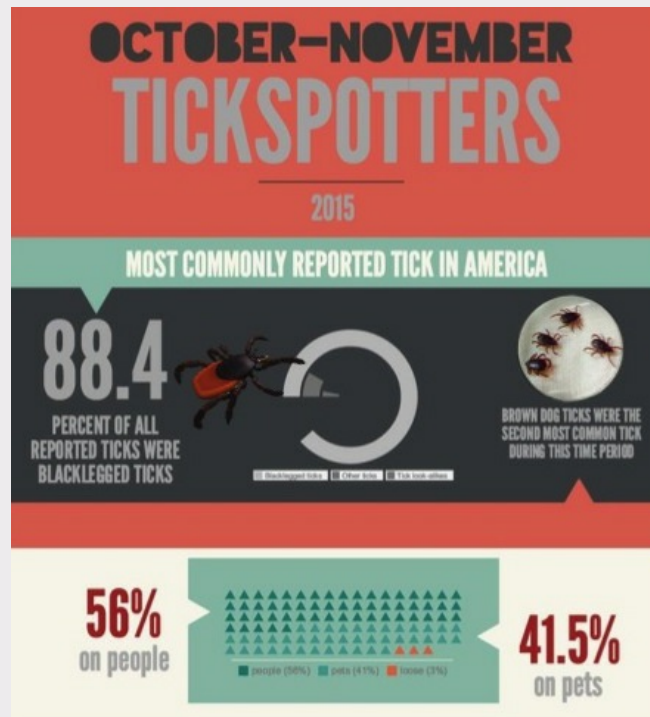


*Photo credit: Brian Mullen*

Blacklegged (deer) tick season has definitely peaked for the autumn season! In the Northeast, mid-Atlantic, and Upper Midwest, this tick is incredibly abundant and they will remain active throughout the winter. Adult blacklegged ticks differ in host-seeking behavior from their earlier-staged ticks in that they quest (i.e. climb) to the tips of tall grasses, weeds, and low shrubs and latch on to passing hosts from there. Their main targets are, you guessed it: deer, so they require higher questing points in order to grab on to the animal's upper legs as it passes by. This means that adult blacklegged ticks attach to us (the unintentional host) at around the same level, and continue to climb up. If you've ever found a tick attached to your head, it's because it crawled up from knee level. Anytime you return from being outside in adult tick territory (tall grass and shrubby areas in and near woods or forest edges) make sure to do a tick check, paying special attention to areas waist-high and above. We've been getting a lot of reports from TickSpotters who found several-day fed ticks at the hairline on the back of their children's heads, so take an extra few seconds to lift that hair up and check behind and in the ears, too. If you happen to see a solid black (male) tick crawling around, it's much less of a concern. As opposed to females, he may only attach lightly so not to fall off, but really doesn't engorge. He's just catching a ride and looking to mate with a female that may also be on board.

With a strong El Niño setting up in the Pacific, predictions are for a milder winter season across America. Don't be tricked into thinking that a day (or week, or month) below freezing will kill these ticks. Check out our [Polar Vorticks experiment](#) to see what we mean!

Make sure to remain TickSmart™ during your time outdoors – treat shoes and clothes with permethrin, tuck in shirts and if you can stand it, your pant cuffs into socks, perform daily tick checks, and keep on protecting your pets! Click [here](#) for more TickSmart ideas to stay tick safe. If you do have a tick encounter, make sure to save the tick, snap a picture, and send it to our [TickSpotters program](#) for identification and risk assessment.



## Spotlight on TickSpotters



Hal and Nate sporting their respective collars.

Earlier this month, we received several TickSpotters reports from Hal Brown in Delaware. Hal has two very loved rescued barn cats that were having multiple daily tick encounters. We recommended the Seresto collar, and life for these felines (and Hal!) has improved greatly. Since so much of our pet protection focus is on dogs, we wanted to let Hal tell his and his cats' story so that other cat lovers know that they need [tick protection](#), too!

*Q: How long have you had each of your cats? What are their names and backstories?*

Our cats, Nate and Hayes (named after an old Tommy Lee Jones pirate movie) are three years old. They were rescues and very scared when my wife and I adopted them. It took a lot of work and time to “socialize” them. However, the time invested was all well worth it; they soon became very sociable and follow-us about like dogs! They come when I whistle and crave affection. Nate is gray and white. Hayes is black.

*Q: You mentioned your property abuts a park (that sounds beautiful!) where your cats are venturing. Are you seeing any ticks in your yard? Any deer?*

I have not seen any ticks. But, we regularly see deer, sometimes large herds. Almost every day, and often several times a day. It is a state park, so there is a very limited and controlled hunting season.

*Q: How many ticks were you finding on your cats? Is it just this fall that you've found them or have you encountered ticks in other seasons as well?*

In the past, I found an occasional tick, perhaps one or two a year. This was controlled with a tick and flea ointment. This fall of 2015, I began to find ticks on these cats almost daily, which prompted me to conduct an internet search, which led me to TickEncounter. Your organization assisted me with identification and provided guidance on prevention.

*Q: What other types of tick preventative were you using before the Seresto collar?*

I don't recall the brand; it was an inexpensive ointment found commonly in pet stores.

*Q: Has there been a noticeable improvement in your tick situation since using Seresto?*

Absolutely. I found one tick total for both cats since starting with the collars and chances are, that tick was already there (pre-collar).

*Q: What do you feel was your greatest misconception regarding ticks?*

The prevalence this year, in my area, was quite alarming.

*Q: Are there any other TickSmart™ actions you plan to take?*

All, with the exception of a yard spray treatment. I am still exploring that, but being on the edge of a park full of deer and other critters, am not sure it would serve any purpose.

*Q: Anything else you'd like to tell us?*

I wish to express my sincere appreciation for the assistance and guidance provided! Thank you so much!



Nate



Hayes

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## TickSmart™ Tools



### **BIG NEWS!**

We've updated our handy "I Just Found a Tick!" cards! These eye-catching informative handouts include how to report a tick encounter to our TickSpotters program for a quick turn-around, personalized risk assessment report usually in 24-36 hrs. If that tick IS risky, guidance is given on how to submit that tick for testing by our partners at UMass. Planning big get-togethers this holiday season? Don't miss out on the perfect opportunity to share this critical information with friends and family members.

### **Order yours today!**

Be sure to stock up on materials and tools to help support your community's TickSmart™ effort! In addition to the "I Just Found a Tick" cards we also have magnets, shower cards, learning kits for schools, camps and libraries, and other **products available for purchase**. They make excellent and affordable customer or neighbor appreciation gifts, and a way to start the conversation about tick safety!

### **MORE BIG NEWS!**

Want more conversation starter ideas? How about a Ticks Suck t-shirt to get people talking? We now have **Ticks Suck t-shirts** available for purchase! Show everyone that you are committed to tickborne disease prevention by declaring that "Ticks Suck!"



## Contact

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