



BeSafeNewtown.org

Newtown residents seeking a Lyme free Newtown with deer free roads, a recovery of the understory of our woodlands and the return of native bird species within 5 years.



A CALL TO ACTION for the residents of Newtown to support a community-wide deer population reduction program that brings deer densities to disease ending levels and restores the natural balance in our woodlands.

Goals

To help organize Newtown residents to work together for the reduction of tick related diseases, deer-vehicle accidents and destruction of the woodlands that result from deer overpopulation. Restoring balance in the forest by reducing deer numbers will facilitate the return of many native bird and wildflower species. Newtown residents who recognize the need for action can participate in this effort. Through the voluntary efforts of landowners and licensed hunters working with the support of our town leaders and advice and cooperation from CT DEEP, deer density levels in Newtown, CT can be reduced to 10-12 per square mile in an affordable, sensitive and responsible manner within 3 years.

In order for the adult stage of the tick to reproduce, deer (or very rarely other large mammals) must be present in high enough densities for adult ticks to find and feed upon them in order to become fertile and lay eggs. In Connecticut, the white-tailed deer is the only host mammal that fulfills this tick-sustaining role. Currently, the deer population in the Redding area is still between 34 and 60 per sq. mile, which is far higher than the target level of 10-12 per square mile at which Lyme disease can be contained. Redding, CT Town Plan of Conservation and Development 2008

“The Redding Health Department has identified Lyme disease as the most commonly reported disease in Redding. The woody character of Redding along with its current overpopulation of deer increases the risk of exposure to deer ticks. “

The Facts

- The DEP deer density study for Newtown found that there are a minimum of 70 deer per square mile
- Woodlands can only support 10 to 15 deer per square mile without suffering damage
- Each deer drops millions of tick eggs here each year at current Newtown deer density levels
- At fewer than 10 deer per square mile deer ticks have difficulty multiplying and so they effectively disappear
- Fairfield County has the highest number of new cases of Lyme per year in CT
- Several New England towns that united around a controlled deer population reduction program have virtually eliminated Lyme disease
- A well-managed deer population reduction program will dramatically reduce tick borne diseases including Lyme within 5 years
- On average Newtown Police record 110 deer vehicle collisions per year
- Deer are causing the loss of native bird and plant species due to over-browsing of their habitat.

What you can do

‘BeSafeNewtown.org’ is intended to facilitate the process of putting responsible landowners in touch with licensed hunters. If you are a landowner in Newtown or one of the surrounding communities and would like to help in the process of getting rid of Lyme disease and achieving the other stated goals of this effort please go to ‘BeSafeNewtown.org’ and contact us via the link provided or call us at 203-364-4381. We will arrange to have an experienced and licensed hunter meet with you to discuss deer population reduction on your property.

In addition, please take the time to contact your friends and neighbors and encourage them to participate in this town wide deer population reduction effort.

Finally, we ask that you would write a letter or make a phone call to state and local officials and encourage them to support deer population reduction as a means of Lyme reduction and as a means of restoring the woodlands.

In the past 3 years, despite the efforts to date, DEP reported deer density levels in Newtown have increased. This is largely the result of lack of participation by private landowners. With 70% of the land in Newtown privately owned and approximately 5% of that land being hunted, this effort cannot succeed without your support. Thanks and Be Safe!

In the coming weeks we hope to call many of you and solicit your cooperation and support for this effort. Please visit our website at ***‘BeSafeNewtown.org’*** and contact us to become a part of the solution. Call (203) 364-4381

More Information

“Reducing deer densities to below 10-12 per sq mile has been shown to substantially reduce tick numbers and human Lyme disease.”

Kirby C. Stafford III, Ph.D., Vice Director, Chief Entomologist, Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Stations, New Haven, CT

“Larval and nymph stages of the deer tick feed on birds and mammals. The adult deer tick, however, requires a blood meal from a medium to large size mammal to reproduce and lay thousands of eggs. Deer are the primary host for the adult deer tick and are the key to the reproductive success of the tick.”

CT Department of Environmental Protection

"A humane resolution to the problem of Lyme disease, putting deer back in balance with the area they inhabit, seems a sane, intelligent and ridiculously logical step. When we bought our home in Redding we had visions of enjoying years of what we love best: outdoors and nature, only to find we are forced to live as if we were the animals in the zoo, behind doors, because reducing deer herds is not being done."

Christine O'Keefe, Redding resident.

-.“White-tailed deer impacts are significant. Unless something is done habitat degradation will continue.” and “There will be continued decline in the biological diversity of the state.” *Connecticut Audubon Society*

Some of the organizations recognizing that reducing deer density levels leads to a reduction in tick related diseases include:

US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection, Connecticut Department of Public Health, and the Fairfield County Municipal Deer Management Alliance, a group of town appointed officials from 18 of 23 towns in Fairfield County.

General Information Regarding Deer Hunting.

- There is no minimum acreage requirement for bow hunting
- The archery hunting season begins September 15 and ends Jan 31
- Surplus deer meat will be donated to ‘Venison for the Hungry’



Tick infested deer

"I have still not recovered from the paralysis of the face (Bell's Palsy) in 1999 and now have Lyme arthritis in both knees. I want to recommend addressing the root cause of the problem, the deer population that keeps ticks spreading, so we can stop any more people getting this terrible disease." *Daniel Liu, Redding pharmacist*

At current deer density levels in Newtown, the number of tick eggs dropped each year from deer is in the billions! A recent deer tick study found that 90% of all ticks in Newtown are infected with either Lyme or babesiosis or both. Safe to hike outside?



Deer tick warning sign displayed around the playgrounds at our schools and other areas throughout Newtown as a result of high tick counts.



Typical Lyme rash of some victims



Indigo Bunting, a Connecticut shrub nesting bird that is endangered by deer and is no longer found in areas with more than 10 deer per square mile, according to Connecticut Audubon.

This program was created in consultation with the CT Departments of Environmental Protection and Public Health, and the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

www.BeSafeNewtown.org