



NC DEPARTMENT OF
**HEALTH AND
HUMAN SERVICES**

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KELLY KIMPLE • Director, Division of Public Health

Date: May 7, 2026

To: NC Veterinarians, Animal Shelters, Animal Rescues, and LHDs

From: Vishvapali Kobbekaduwa, PhD, State Public Health Entomologist

Subject: NC Tick Identification Program

About the NC Tick Identification Program:

The North Carolina Division of Public Health's Communicable Disease (CD) Branch continues to offer its statewide tick identification program, in partnership with NC veterinary professionals, animal shelters, and local health departments. We are accepting submissions of ticks collected from both animals and people, which will be identified by the State Public Health Entomologist to better understand the diversity and distribution of ticks statewide. Participation is voluntary but strongly encouraged. In 2025, reported cases of several tickborne diseases, including Lyme disease, ehrlichiosis, and spotted fever rickettsiosis, increased among NC residents compared with 2024, highlighting the importance of tick surveillance. The discovery of the invasive longhorned tick (*Haemaphysalis longicornis*) in 2018 further emphasizes the need for tick monitoring to protect human and animal health. Although active surveillance has been conducted in approximately 72 counties since 2004, it is time-consuming and resource intensive. Therefore, **passive surveillance through tick submissions from veterinary practices, shelters, animal rescues, and members of the public remains essential to achieving comprehensive statewide coverage.** Your facility's participation is vital to identifying emerging tick threats and guiding public health responses. Surveillance data from 2018 to 2025 are available on our [interactive dashboard](#).

Instructions for Tick Collection and Submission:

- [Remove](#) both flat (unfed) and fed ticks from a person or an animal.
- Place ticks in a Ziploc bag or plastic vial with a cotton ball soaked in isopropyl alcohol.
- Complete a brief outline of the patient demographic information ([humans](#), [animals](#)).
- Ticks from different people/animals should be placed in separate Ziplocs, each accompanied by its own submission form. Multiple Ziplocs may be mailed together in a single envelope.
- Prepaid mailing envelopes will be provided by the CD Branch.

If you are interested in participating or require additional prepaid mailing envelopes, please contact Dr. Vishvapali (Viva) Kobbekaduwa at NCTickID@dhhs.nc.gov. Upon request, prepaid envelopes and submission forms will be sent to your facility.

Send all submissions to the address below. Ticks will be identified, and tick species identification results will be emailed directly to the submitter. **Ticks will not be tested for pathogens.** Thank you for your participation!

**NC Tick Identification Program
c/o Dr. Vishvapali Kobbekaduwa
1902 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, NC 27699-1902**

NC DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES • DIVISION OF PUBLIC HEALTH

LOCATION: 65 Moore Drive, Durham, NC 27713

MAILING ADDRESS: 1902 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, NC 27699-1902

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