

## WORLDWIDE CONCERNS ABOUT LYME & OTHER TICK-BORNE DISEASES\*

The web site of the CDC World Health Organization Coordinating Committee gives us a glimpse of the magnitude of the Lyme problem:

- Lyme borreliosis [Lyme disease] is focally endemic in North America, Europe and Asia and is probably the most common tick-borne bacterial disease in the world. In the United States, Lyme disease accounts for more than 90% of all reported cases of vector-borne illness.

**The United Nations is increasingly concerned about the spread of Lyme disease**

- Harvard Medical School Center with Sponsorship from Swiss Re and UN Development Programme "Climate Change Futures: Health, Ecological and Economic Dimensions" Study shows that areas suitable for tick habitation will increase by 213% by the 2080s.
- **UNEP Launches 2004/5 GEO Yearbook Nairobi Feb 2005** Studies in Dutchess County, New York, have linked the high incidence of Lyme disease there with changes in the forest habitats as well as social factors. Forest fragmentation has led to a loss of rodent predators such as wolves and birds of prey which in turn has led to an increase in the white-footed mouse population. Patchy reforestation has increased the numbers of deer and thus ticks. Middle class suburban sprawl and the increasing use of woodlands for recreation such as camping and hiking has brought humans into greater contact with larger number of infected ticks.
- **May 4 2005 UN:10 Stories the world should hear more about** United Nations Department of Public Information (DPI) head, Shashi Tharoor, presented on World Press Freedom Day, Ten Stories the World Should Hear More About— "... a wide spectrum of matters of concern to many, many people around the world, and we look forward to working with media everywhere to help raise the profile of these stories.... If it were asked the first answer, DPI would point to UN Environment Programme (UNEP) reports from scientists who "have identified a loathsome catalogue of infectious diseases that have revived and thrived in places where natural habitats are altered or degraded by loggers, road and dam builders and urban encroachment...." In the United States, "cases of the tick-borne Lyme disease in New York and Connecticut have surged as humans have moved into forested areas where tick-carrying deer thrive."

**World Health Organization reports on links between human and ecosystem health**

- [Ecosystems and Human Well-being](#), WHO's contribution to [Millennium Ecosystem Assessment](#), a four-year research series involving 1,300+ international scientists, launched by the U.N. secretary-general in 2001 designed to provide scientific data that will support the administration of a variety of global compacts on environmental issues such as deforestation, biological diversity and wetlands preservation. The report says environmental trends such as deforestation and climate-induced habitat change are affecting insects, which carry diseases like malaria and Lyme disease.

**From Reuters Foundation AlertNet, alerting humanitarians to emergencies**

***Senegal: Lyme disease: The Forgotten Scourge of West Africa***

- From 1990 to 2003, researchers studying malaria in Senegal also looked into the prevalence of Lyme disease. The results of their 14-year study showed that between 4 and 25 percent of the population presented cases with an average rate of incidence of 11 percent per year. Other studies conducted in rural parts of Senegal, Mali and Mauritania confirmed these results. According to researchers, only malaria and flu are as frequent. Lyme disease is said to be "a serious public health problem."