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Subject: : Paflyfish General Forum

Topic: : It's snake time!

Re: It's snake time!

Author: : pcray1231

Date: : 2013/6/10 9:57:15

URL:

haha, it was in response to post #8, where BeastBrown associated the population density of snakes with mice, and thus ticks. There's some logic there but it requires several assumptions that I'm not sure are true.

1. High population of snakes = low population of mice. While snakes eat mice, the opposite is more likely true. They don't have enough of an effect on mice populations, so the effect is outweighed by the fact that snakes follow mice. Where there are more mice, there will be more snakes.

2. High population of mice = high population of ticks. Ticks do feed on mice at certain stages of development. And it would make sense that a higher number of hosts in an area = higher number of ticks. But both ticks and mice populations vary tremendously from season to season. And they do not necessarily coincide. The predator (tick) population lags the prey (host). So a high population of mice LAST YEAR may increase the tick population this year, as more ticks were successful and reproduced.

There are some noteworthy papers that tie a decrease in mice populations to an increase in human tick bites. The theory seems to be that it's not so much about the tick population, but about the population actively looking for hosts. A tick attached to a mouse is not looking for a host, and less likely to bite a human. It may be, though, that a decrease in mouse populations is indicative of a mouse population boom in prior years, hence the tick population exploded.

Been reading up on this stuff as I have an 18 month old, and a current tick boom. We've pulled a few out of him already.