



**Department
of Health**

New York State Public Health Corps Fellowship Program

Statewide Consortium Networking Meeting

February 25th, 2026 | Zoom

WELCOME

Amber Whiteside

Region 1 Fellowship Program Specialist

Shirley Wild

Region 3 Fellowship Program Specialist

Agenda

- Welcome & Agenda Overview
- Spotlight Presentation: Cherina Cheng
- Spotlight Presentation: Sagarika Vemprala
- Spotlight Presentation: Abhishek Pandey
- Breakout Room Overview & Instructions
- Fellow Networking Breakout Rooms
- Debriefing from Breakout Rooms
- Closing Remarks & Announcements

FELLOW SPOTLIGHT:

Cherina Cheng





**Department
of Health**

New York State Wastewater Surveillance Network

**Cherina Cheng, Public Health Fellow II
Center for Environmental Health**

NYSPHC Consortium Meeting | February 25, 2026

What is Wastewater Surveillance?

New York State Wastewater Surveillance



Wastewater surveillance is the **testing of untreated wastewater** to identify the types and levels of pathogens circulating in sewage water entering a wastewater treatment plant.

Identifying these in wastewater can be a reliable indicator of illnesses circulating in a community.



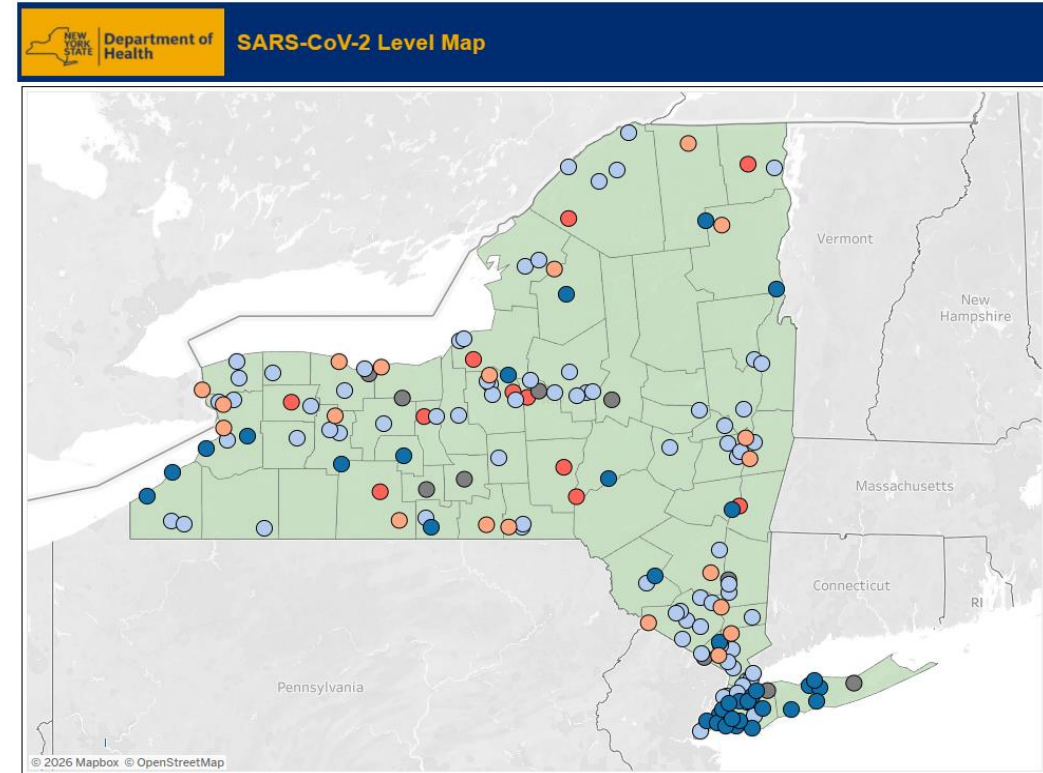
History

- Used since mid-19th century
- Gained traction during the pandemic
- Many wastewater programs are expanding to track more pathogens

Benefits

- Early detection of disease in a community
- Representative of entire communities
- Complements other data metrics

The NYS Wastewater Surveillance Team



Department of Health

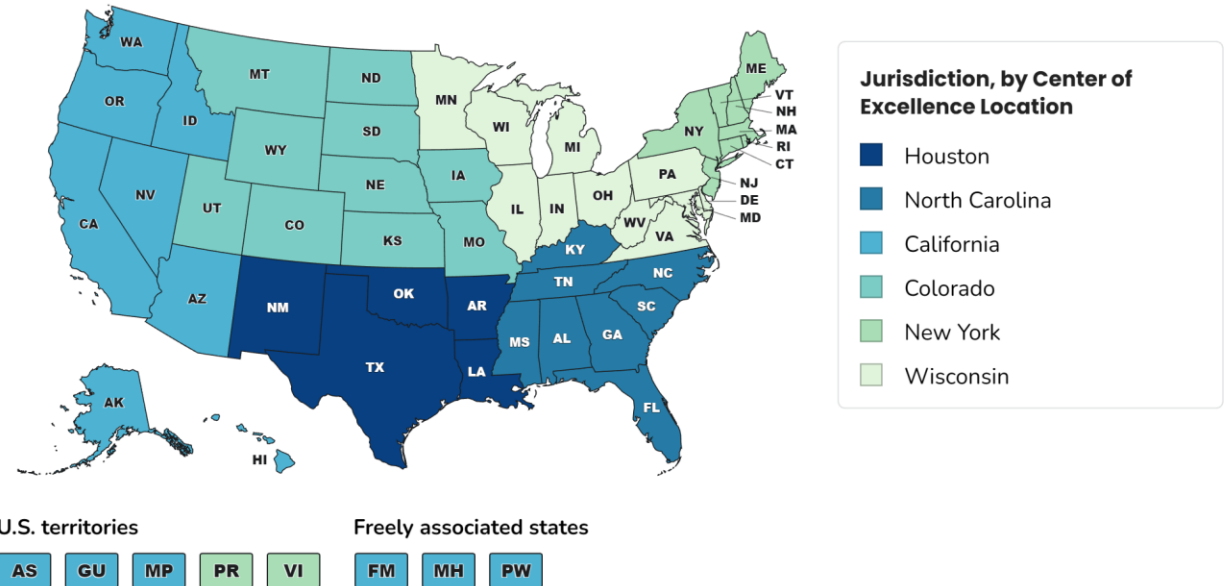


CDC Foundation
Together our impact is greater



The New York NWSS Center of Excellence

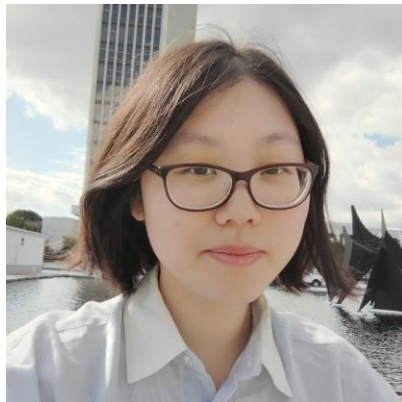
- We became a Center of Excellence in August 2024
- We serve as a regional leader in the field of wastewater surveillance
- We support other jurisdictions' wastewater surveillance programs
 - Responding to technical assistance requests and providing SME
 - Developing resources
 - Organizing conferences to share research and network



What I Do

About Me

- BS in Biological Sciences, BA in History and Philosophy of Science — University of Pittsburgh
- MPH coursework at the School of Public Health
- Student Research Assistant — qualitative coding of nicotine and tobacco social media content



Fellowship Duties

- Preparing for our Monthly Regional Calls
- Updating our program tracker
 - Technical requests
 - Presentations
 - Publications
- Responding to emails
- Maintaining meeting notes
- And many projects...

Projects

List of Projects (in order of start date)

- Cost analysis
- Communications Library
- Dashboard guide
- Animated videos
- Website FAQs
- Communications Library content analysis
- FIFA World Cup literature review

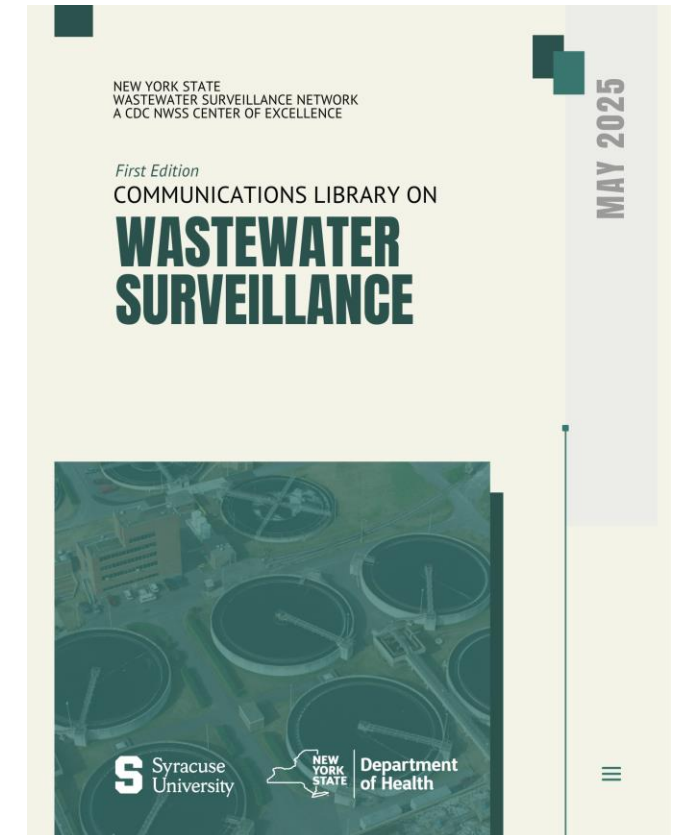
Highlighted Project #1: Cost Analysis

- Gathered cost data from invoices
- Used R to extract sample count data from network datasets
- Calculated/estimated costs
- Contributed to manuscript draft
 - Methods
 - Tables and pie charts
 - Limitations
 - References

Projects (continued)

Highlighted Project #2: Communications Library

- Features more than 250 resources, all related to wastewater surveillance
- Annotated bibliography format, with citations and descriptions
- Available on our website [here](#)
- Resources were categorized by audience
 - Everyone
 - Public health professionals
 - Lab staff
 - Wastewater utility staff



Contact Information!

Thank you for listening!

- Email: cherina.cheng@health.ny.gov
- Network email:
wastewaternetwork@health.ny.gov
- Center of Excellence
website: <https://nywastewatcher.io/>
- DOH
website: <https://www.health.ny.gov/environmental/wastewater/>

FELLOW SPOTLIGHT:

Sagarika Vemprala



T O M P K I N S C O U N T Y
ORAL HEALTH





ORAL HEALTH SURVEY

BACKGROUND

Discipline ⓘ	HPSA ID ⓘ	HPSA Name ⓘ	Designation Type ⓘ	Primary State Name ⓘ	County Name ⓘ	HPSA FTE Short ⓘ	HPSA Score ⓘ	PC MCTA Score ⓘ	Status ⓘ	Rural Status ⓘ
Primary Care	1365515033	ME - Tompkins County	Medicaid Eligible Population HPSA	New York	Tompkins County, NY	5.27	16	2	Designated	Non-Rural
Dental Health	6365459857	ME - Tompkins County	Medicaid Eligible Population HPSA	New York	Tompkins County, NY	3.70	20	NA	Designated	Non-Rural
Mental Health	7367874319	ME - Tompkins County	Medicaid Eligible Population HPSA	New York	Tompkins County, NY	1.35	19	NA	Designated	Non-Rural

SURVEY OVERVIEW

Purpose:

- To identify gaps in knowledge
- Assess the adequacy of dental care access
- Assess oral health knowledge, attitudes, and practices among children in the county
- Understand residents' perspectives regarding fluoride.

Methods:

- A KAP (Knowledge, Attitudes, Practices) survey was administered to parents and caregivers of children under 18 in Tompkins County.
- Survey Period: February 9, 2024 – April 13, 2024
- A flyer containing a QR code and a link to the survey was distributed

SURVEY OVERVIEW

Methods:

- 18 questions total
- Included both multiple-choice and free-text responses

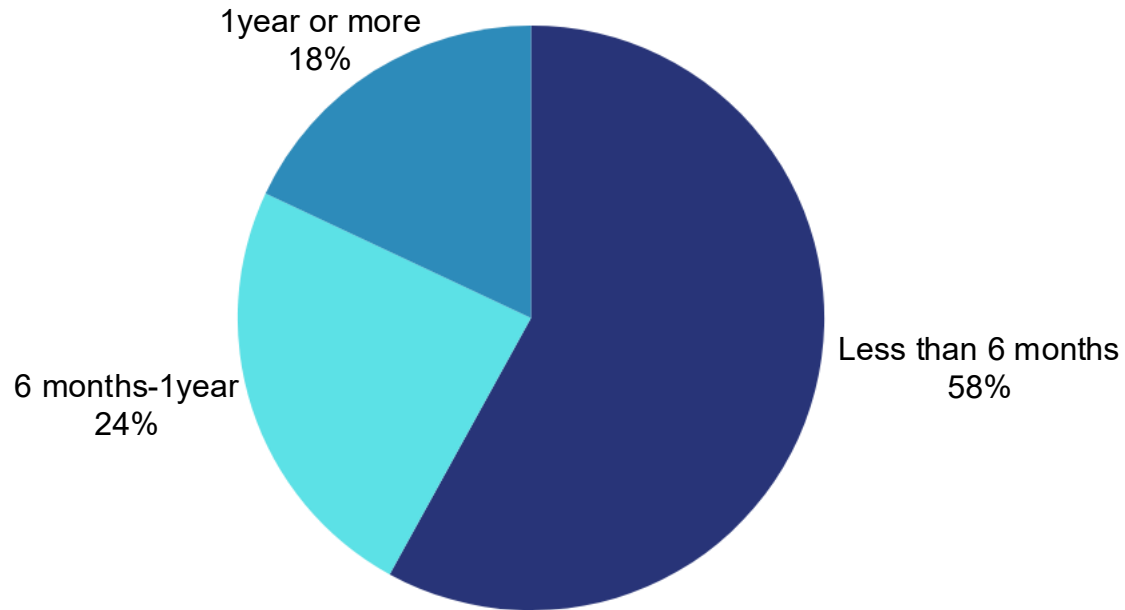
Distribution Channels:

- Public schools
- Text messages to WIC participants
- Social media
- Community newsletters
- Community bulletins

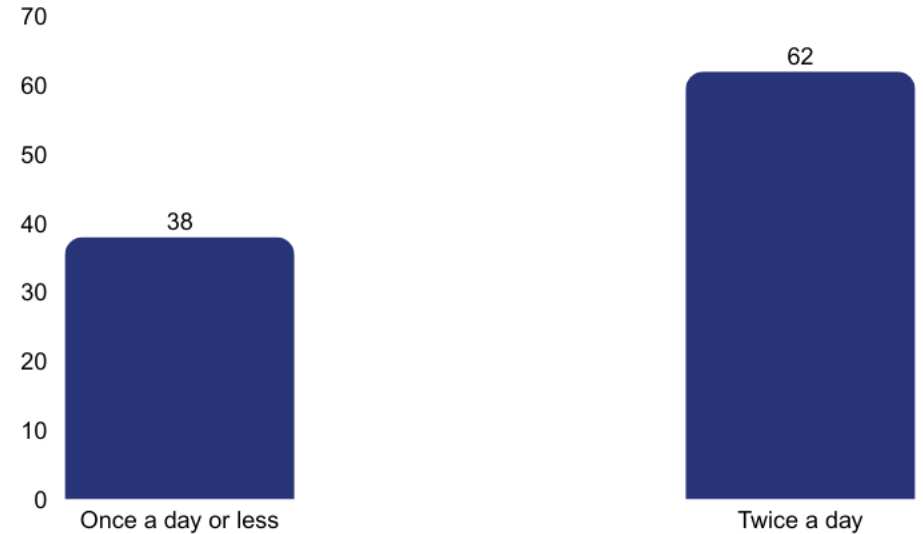
Total Responses Collected: 645

- WIC Participants: 85 responses
- School, Social Media, and Community Channels: 560 responses

SURVEY RESULTS

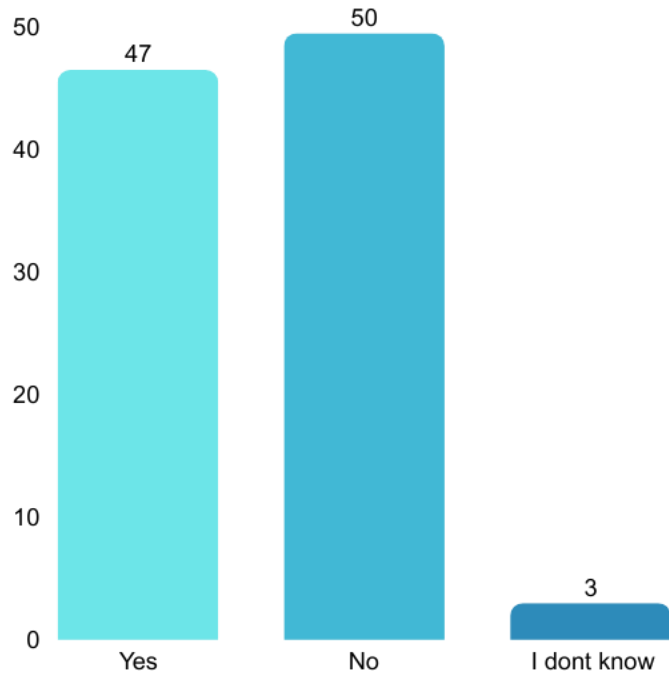


Percentage of children's last dental visits

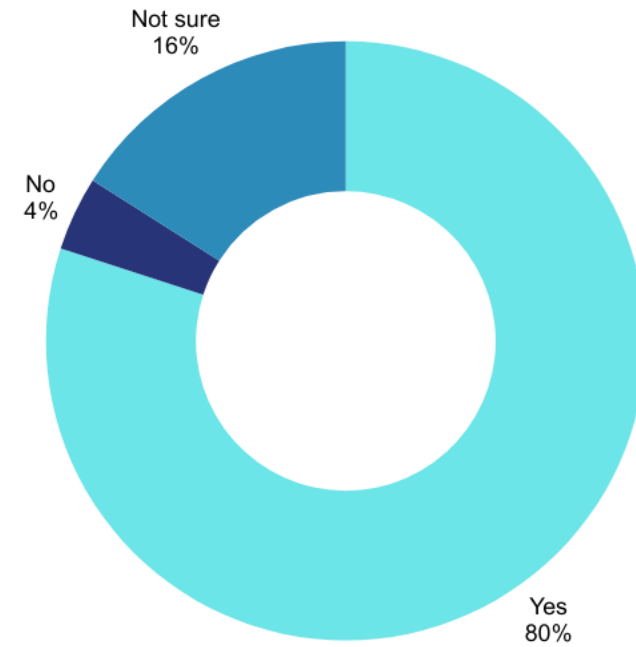


Percentage of children's brushing habits frequency

SURVEY RESULTS

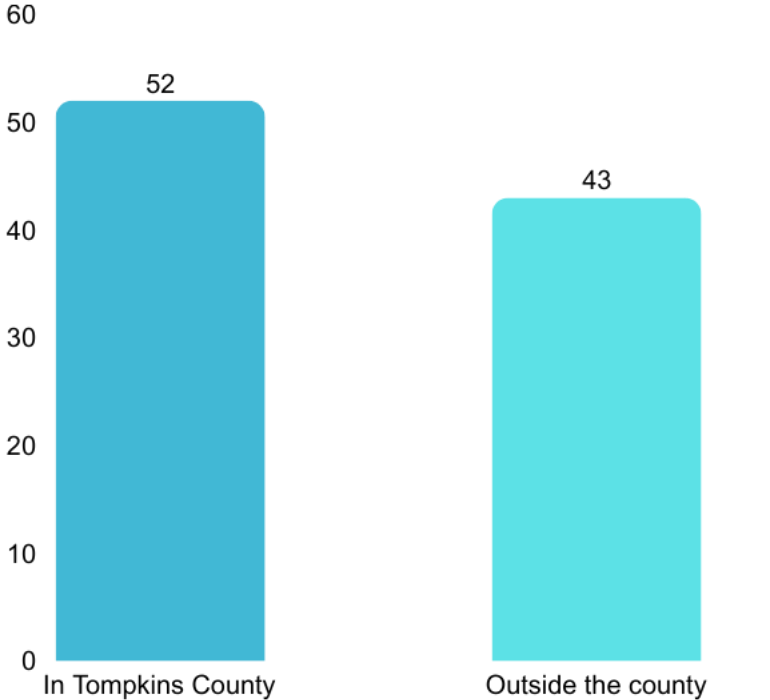


Percentage of children using floss/interdental brushes

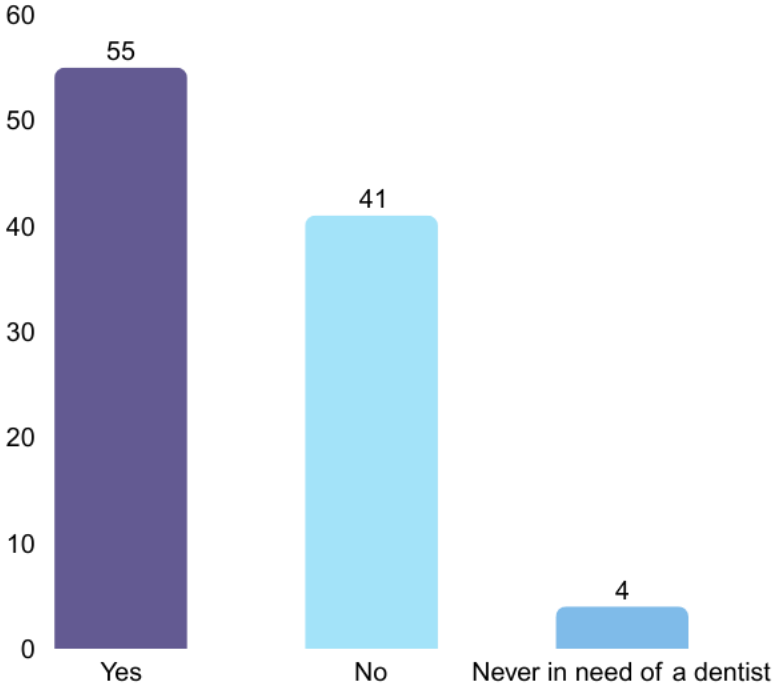


Percentage of respondents' beliefs about fluoride benefits

SURVEY RESULTS

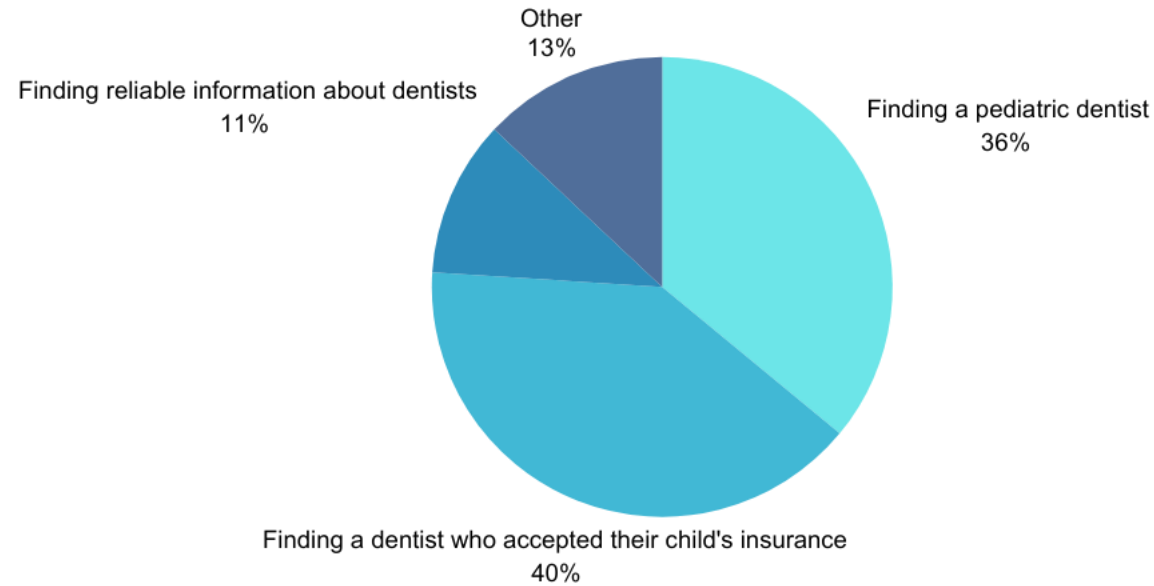


Percentage of children's dental visits by location



Percentage of parents reporting difficulty in finding a dentist for their child

SURVEY RESULTS



Percentage of reasons for children experiencing difficulties finding a dentist in Tompkins County

WHAT WE HAVE DONE SO FAR




THANK YOU



FELLOW SPOTLIGHT:

Abhishek Pandey



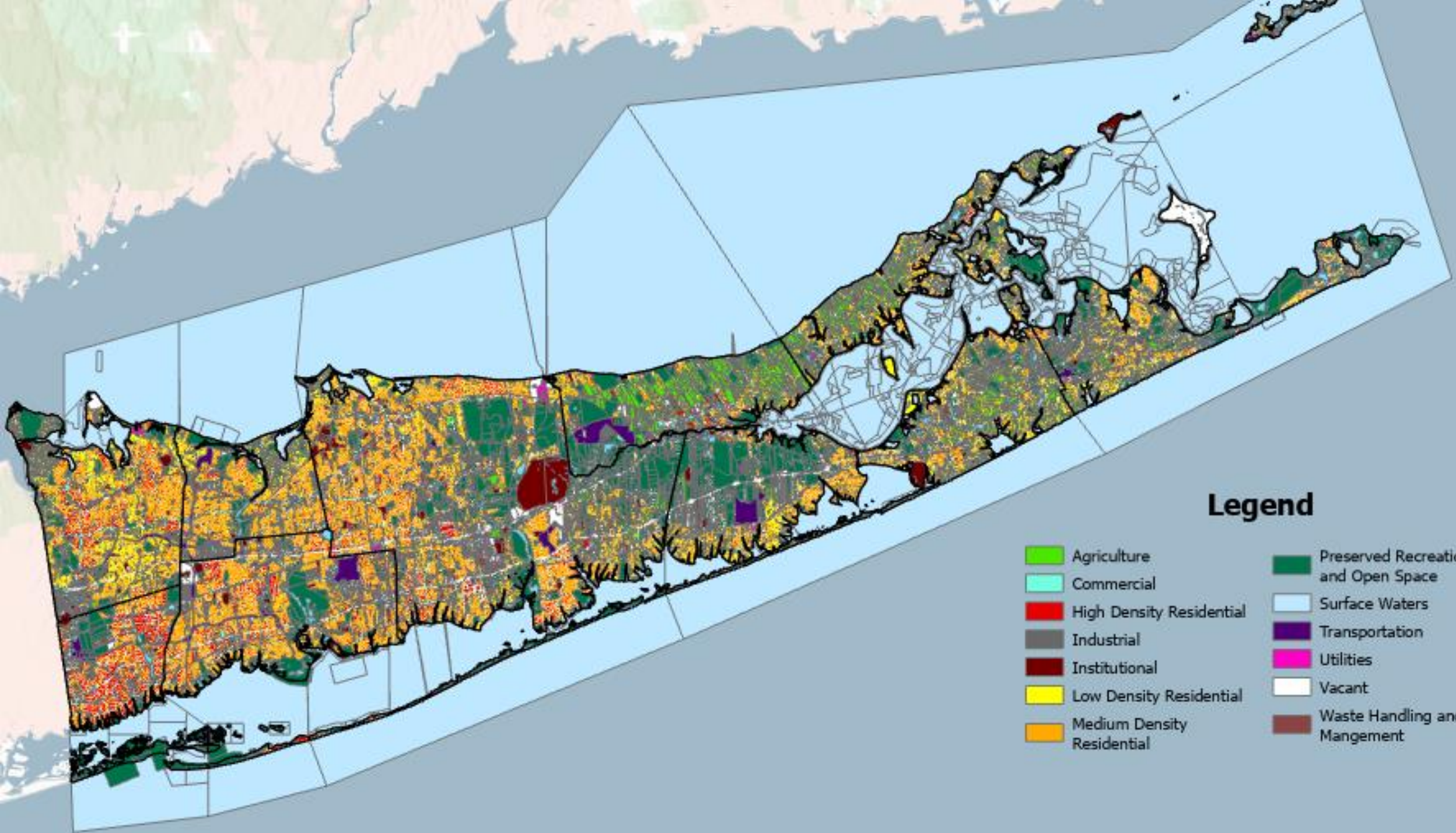


Analysis of Lyme Disease Burden Between Eastern and Western Suffolk County

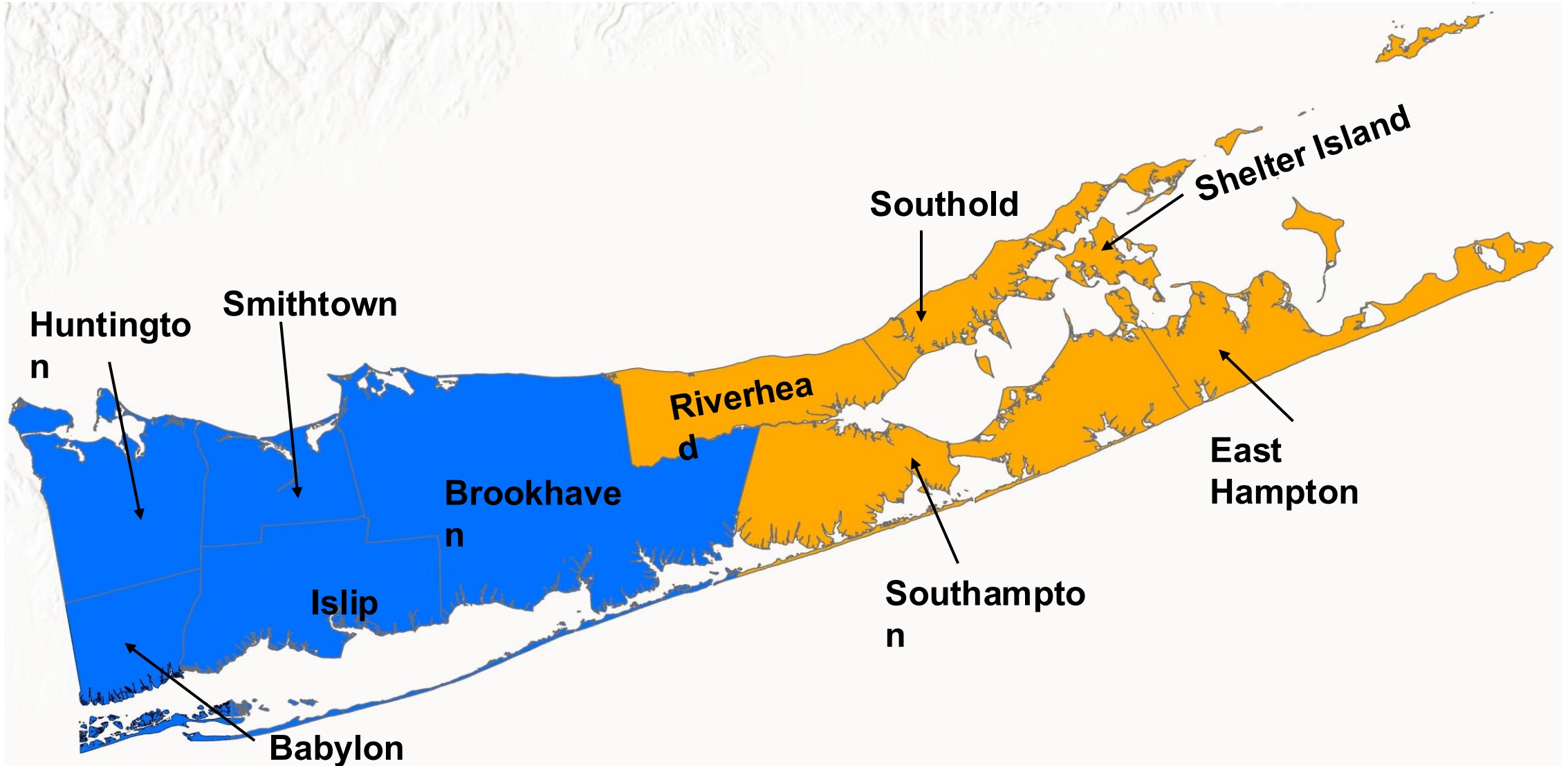
Abhishek Pandey M.S.

Public Health Fellow II

SCDHS Arthropod-Borne Disease
Laboratory



The Regions: East Vs. West

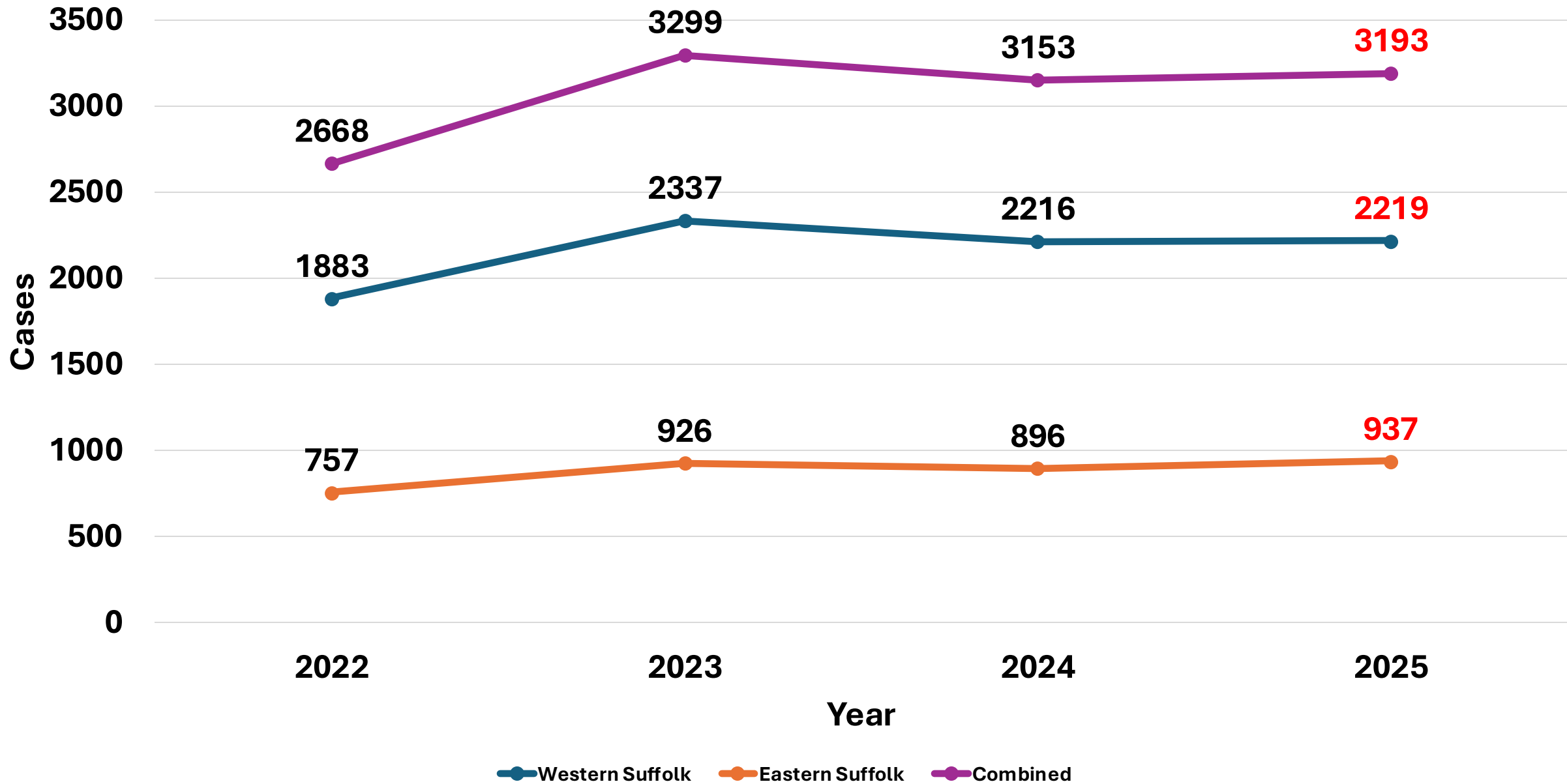


Goals of this analysis

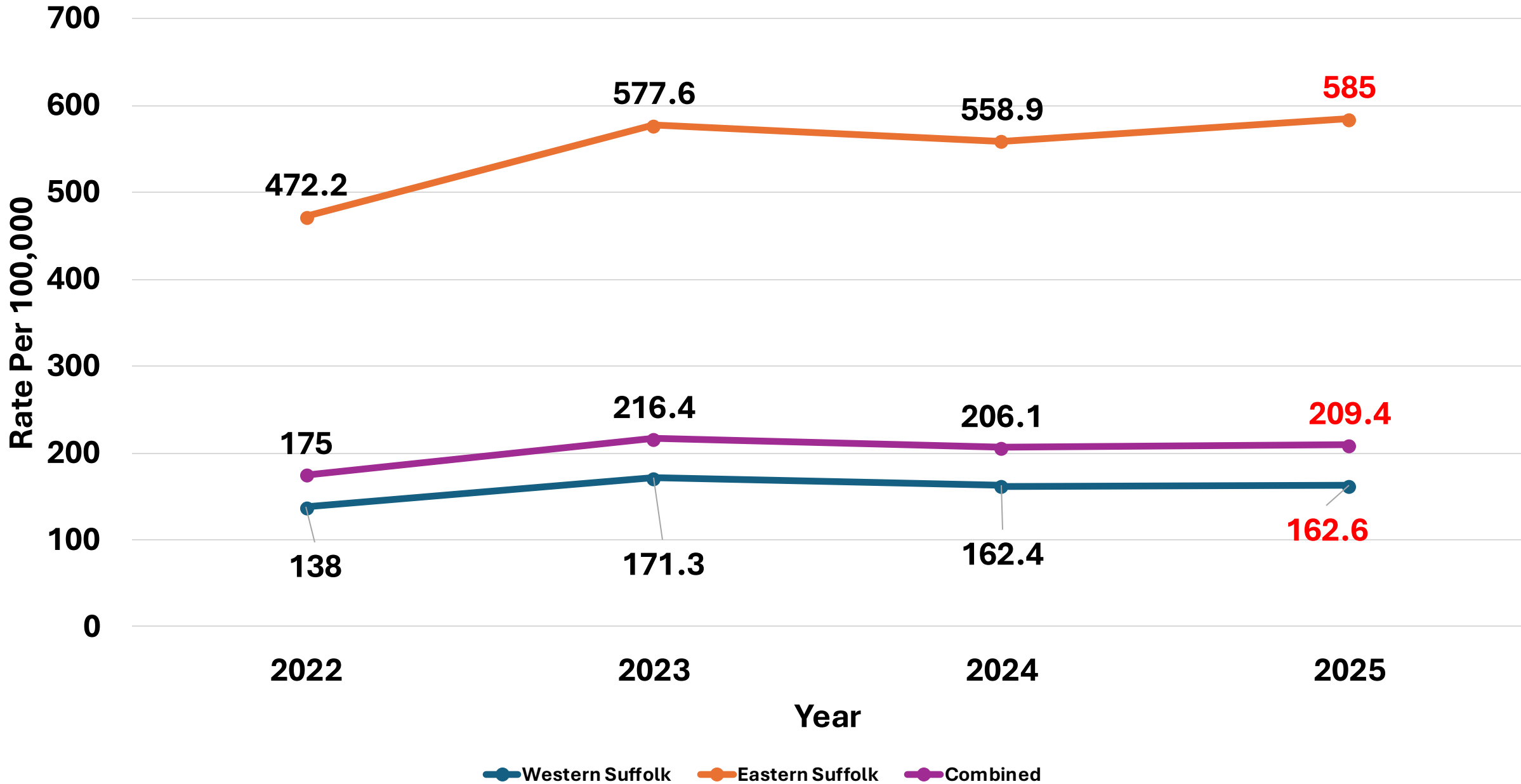
- Analyze geographic and ecological differences in tick-borne disease burden.
- Evaluate spatial and temporal trends in tick-borne diseases.
- Identify limitations and challenges in vector-borne disease surveillance.



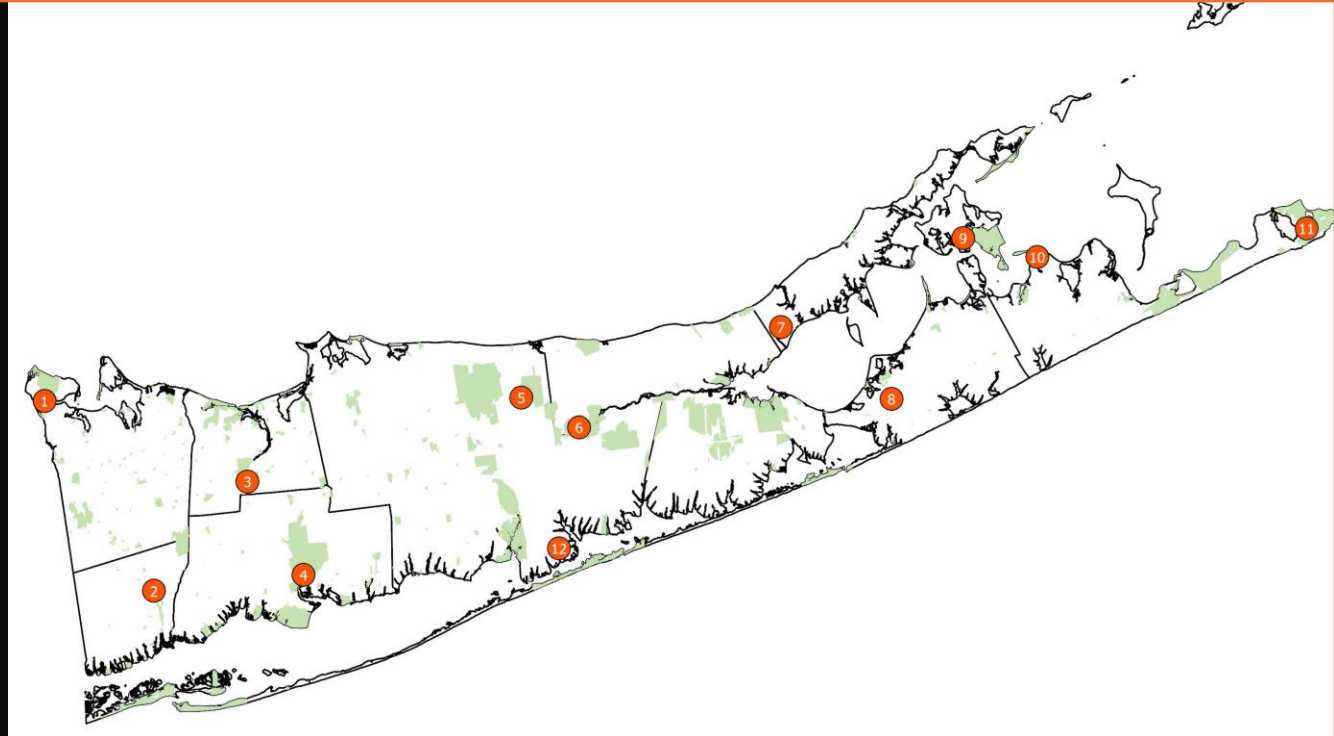
Lyme Disease Cases



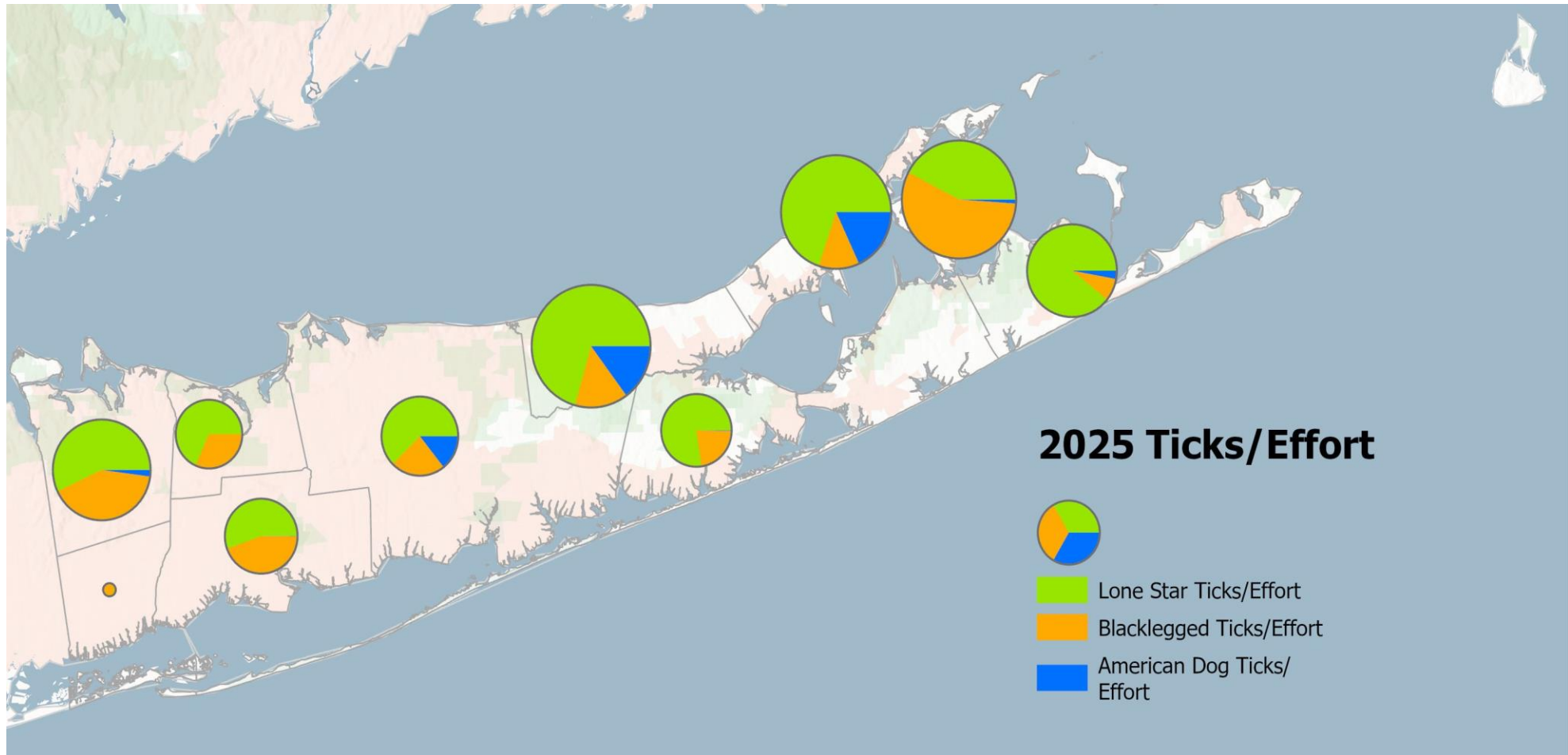
Lyme Disease Rate Per 100,000



Fieldwork



Number of Ticks Collected in 2025



Entomological Risk Index

- Entomological Risk Index (ERI) is a metric used in vector-borne disease surveillance to estimate the risk of human exposure to infected vectors (such as ticks).

Formula:

$$\frac{\textit{Total Black Legged Ticks (Nymph or Adult) collected at location}}{\textit{Total distance travelled at location (m}^2\textit{)}} \times (\textit{Infection Rate of tested ticks at location})$$

Investigation of ERI Between Eastern and Western Suffolk County

- East has a higher nymphal ERI but weakly linked to incidence (borderline).
- Adult ERI strongly tracks incidence in the east.
- Interaction test confirms regional effect modification for adult ERI.



ERI Between Eastern and Western Suffolk County Cont.

- **Biology:** Adult ticks are more abundant and infected in the east; nymphs matter more in the west.
- **Environmental:** East has more wooded habitats. West is more urban.
- **Ecology:** Deer density and host structure may favor adult ticks in the East.





Thank You For Listening!

Contact Info:
abhishek.pandey@suffolkcountyny.gov
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NYSPHC Fellows

Networking Breakout Rooms

What is Networking

- **Networking:** Builds professional connections and relationships to benefit Fellows now and in the long run.

Breakout Room Instructions

- Fellows will self-select breakout rooms based on the Fellowship project areas they selected when registering.
- There will be one round of discussion, lasting 25 minutes. We will debrief after the networking session.
- Since the purpose of this event is to make connections, all participants are expected to fully participate.

Breakout Room Instructions

- Fellows were asked to come with their own questions and conversation topics for their group. However, NYSPHC will share sample questions, which Fellows may use to further conversation.
- We ask Fellows to participate with an open mind and willingness to learn from each other.
- NYSPHC staff will be present in each breakout room to encourage networking.

Sample Questions for Discussion

Networking Sample Questions

- What's one current project or initiative you're working on?
 - What is going well?
 - What's a challenge you're facing or lesson you've learned from it?
 - Do others have suggestions about how to address the challenge or about the project?
 - How would you suggest others handle a similar initiative?
- What is an area of public health that you would like to know more about?

Sample Questions for Discussion

Fellow Spotlight and Article Discussion Questions:

- How is your host organization currently engaged in wastewater surveillance or addressing issues related to oral health or Lyme Disease?
- Are you currently working on any of these projects in your Fellowship? If not, are there any areas of overlap between these projects and what you are currently working on?
- What are some strategies you've learned or would like to learn more about when it comes to addressing these public health issues? Are there any strategies that could be applied to your work on other public health projects?

Breakout Room

25 minutes



You will now join a breakout room based on your area of interest.

Topics to choose from are:

- Epidemiology and Lab Reporting
- Program and Organizational Management
- Policy and Partnership Development
- Communications and Emergency Preparedness

Breakout Room

25 minutes

- There may be some topics that have more than one room for the topic because many Fellows indicated interest.
- Please join the room with your topic of interest that has the fewest number of participants to keep the rooms balanced.
- NYSPHC staff may rebalance rooms if needed.
- You will receive a broadcast message when the groups are finalized

Breakout Room

25 minutes

- To join a room, click the “join breakout rooms” icon on the black menu bar at the bottom of your screen.
- You will be returned to the main room after 25 minutes.
- There will be a group debrief, so please come ready to discuss what rooms you were in, what was discussed, and how it went. *Remember to assign a notetaker/reporter!*

Breakout Room Debrief

Breakout Rooms Debrief:

- Insights?
- Discoveries?
- Interesting Connections?

CLOSING REMARKS

Educational Series

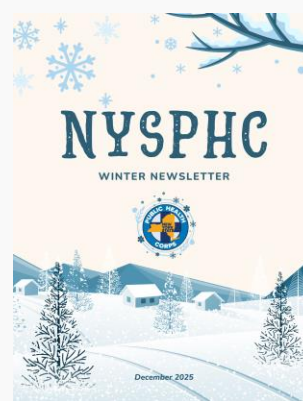
- **March 11th, 2026, 12 PM to 1 PM**
 - Collaboration is Key:
Strengthening HIV Care and Prevention Across the Continuum
- **May 13th, 2026, 12 PM to 1 PM**
 - *Prevention Agenda Overview*
- **June 2026, Date/Time TBD**

PHOTOS AND STORIES SURVEY

Want to be featured in an upcoming Newsletter?

NYSPHC aims to highlight our fellows and share the impact our program has on public health service.

Please submit stories and images that reflect on the impact of your Fellowship through this survey [HERE](#)



NYSPHC LINKEDIN GROUP

- Stay connected with NYSPHC on LinkedIn
 - Stay updated on public health events
 - Engage with polls and share your insights
 - Keep today's conversation going



Reminder: Employee Assistance Program



Department
of Health

Help for what matters most

Your employee assistance program

Our Employee Assistance Program offers services to help promote well-being and enhance the quality of life for you and your family.

Support and guidance is available for assistance with family and personal issues online at worklife.uprisehealth.com and by phone at 1-800-386-7055.

Help with health	Help with family	Help with legal and financial
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Healthy living • Stress management • Mental health • Diet and fitness • Overall wellness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parenting support • Child and elder care • Learning programs • Special needs help 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legal issues • Will preparation • Taxes and debt • ID theft services • Financial tools and assistance • Medical bill negotiation tools

Connect to a counselor for complimentary support services:

Email: eapcounselor@uprisehealth.com

Phone: 1-800-386-7055

Available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week*

Web: worklife.uprisehealth.com

(Access code: worklife)

When calling for assistance please use the following information

Employer - Staffing Solutions Organization

Group Number - G-540112

*Offering hours Monday through Friday 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM. Live services are available 24 hours a day. The Employee Assistance Program services are provided by uprisehealth, a third-party contractor. Upromise does not provide any part of the Employee Assistance Program. Upromise is not responsible for the cost of assistance provided by any provider or institution under the program. This information is for informational purposes only. It is not a contract. Only the information on the agreement can be used to determine services, benefits and restrictions. Upromise and/or its health plan or the rights to assistance under the Employee Assistance Program are subject to change without notice. Legal services provided through the Employee Assistance Program will not be provided to customers with or preparation for any action against Upromise, uprisehealth or your employer. The Employee Assistance Program is not an insurance benefit and may not be available in all states. Please contact your administrator for more information. © The Guardian Life Insurance Company of America, New York, NY. uprisehealth, uprisehealth.com, Upromise and Upromise Health are registered trademarks of The Guardian Life Insurance Company of America used with uprisehealth written permission. © Copyright 2022 The Guardian Life Insurance Company of America.

Thank you!



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