density-independent mortality agents such as weather, may affect patterns of density fluctuations in populations of black-legged ticks, and we hope that such factors will be rigorously examined. Finally, we agree with David E. Blockstein (Letters, 20 Mar., p. 1831) that the extinct passenger pigeon may have altered ecological interactions important today in determining Lyme-disease risk by reducing the tendency of white-footed mice to fluctuate with acorn production. The loss of the American chestnut (*Castanea dentata*) from eastern forests earlier this century, and the consequent increase in dominance by oaks (*5*), may also have had a similar effect. Extinctions may have unanticipated repercussions in ecosystems that affect humans directly and indirectly.

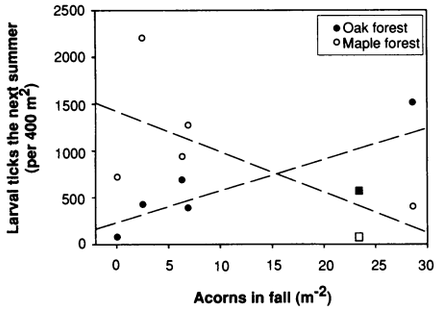

Fig. 1. Association between density of acorns produced in fall and density of larval *Ixodes scapularis* ticks the following summer. Acorn densities from 1991 to 1996 were determined using methods described in note (*1*). Density estimates for larval *Ixodes scapularis* were obtained by sampling four 100-meter transacts with a 1-meter drag cloth on two 2.25-hectare sampling plots each summer from 1992 to 1997. Values are average peak densities of ticks each year. For oak-dominated forests, linear regression $r^2 = 0.67$, df = 5, $P = 0.05$; for adjacent maple-dominated forests, linear regression $r^2 = 0.46$, df = 5, $P = 0.14$.

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References and Notes

1. Data on mast production were obtained in two 2.25-hectare oak-dominated forest plots at the Institute of Ecosystem Studies (IES) in Millbrook, New York, with the use of seed traps placed under the canopies of four species of dominant canopy trees, *Quercus rubra, Q. prinus, Q. alba*, and Carya glabra. One 0.5-meter² seed trap was deployed under each of five specimens of each tree species, and total acorn production (acorns per meter²) was determined each year from 1992 to 1996 (C.D. Canham, unpublished data). Data from 1991 (square symbols in Fig. 1) were obtained by averaging *Q. rubra* acorns in 21 2-meter²-quadrants placed along each of four 100-meter transepts in a similar oak-dominated forest 35 kilometers from IES (T. N. Coulson, thesis, University of London, 1994, pp. 49–50).
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5. E. L. Braun, *Deciduous Forests of Eastern North America* (Free Press, New York, 1950).

CORRECTIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

In the article "NIH urged to involve the public in policy-making" by Eliot Marshall (News of the Week, 10 July, p. 152), the new advisory structure for the National Institutes of Health (NIH) recommended by the Institute of Medicine (IOM) was misconstrued. The IOM report called for a Council of Public Representatives only in the office of the director of NIH (not in each NIH institute). However, the report does call for a new, NIH-staffed public liaison office in each institute and more public representatives on existing institute committees.