



Lymeez Tick Gaiters

In general, I try not to let insects, arachnids, and other arthropods bug me too much. I'm fortunate in that I don't react to mosquito bites, and I'd just as soon share a little space with a spider rather than kill it. In general, I find that insects get a bad rap and that they are often unjustly maligned.

I make an exception for ticks, however. I'm sure somebody can put a positive spin on ticks but I'm not the person for that job. It was four years ago that a bug bite on my upper leg transformed into the bullseye rash that is a calling card of Lyme disease. To this day that experience is one that I'll go out of my way to avoid—more than any other. I'd rush into the arms of poison ivy and biting flies if it meant escaping the fever, general fatigue, and malaise that I experienced from that tick bite.

When the situation warrants, I even tuck my pant legs into my socks to deter the little buggers from climbing up my legs. In the past I've found

this birder fashion trend to be objectionable, but in the face of Lyme disease, I've acquiesced.

Today I'm here to tell you that, as fashion-forward birders, we can now have our cake and eat it too! Behold: tick gaiters from Lymeez! I first saw these calf wraps in action at the Acadia Birding Festival this past May, and was impressed enough to contact the folks at Lymeez to review a pair for this column. At \$30 per pair, I think these might be just as important as a good pair of binoculars for birders who enjoy the outdoors in tick country. Not only am I spared from having to tuck my pant legs into my socks, but I get some added design benefits with these gaiters.

There are three ways in which these gaiters are designed to keep ticks out of your pants. The first line of defense is simply covering the gap between your pants and boots, which we all understand. Second, the 3-D mesh texture of the gaiters creates a surface that is much

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more challenging for ticks to traverse. According to Lymeex, the 3-D mesh pattern slows a tick's climbing rate by from four to eight times. The last line of defense is the permethrin-infused fabric, which is an effective tick repellent. This is the same repellent infused in most of the "bug proof" clothing we see on the market, which has proven to be relatively effective. While the permethrin is said to endure up to 50 washings, unlike my bug resistant socks, I wouldn't feel compelled to have to throw these gaiters in the wash after a hard day of birding. That's another positive in my book.

Being an affordable and effective product that suits birders' needs will generally lead to high marks here on The Well-Equipped Birder pages of *BWD*. When you throw in comfortable and easy-to-use, then you've got yourself a real winner. I found the gaiters to be lightweight and breathable. In fact, I even wore them with shorts on those hot days of summer when I couldn't bring myself to wear long pants. I also love the fact that I can put them on and off without having to remove my footwear. These gaiters wrap around your calves and fasten onto themselves with Velcro, making them an effective one-



size-fits-all product!

Lymeex gaiters are available in birder friendly earth tones including tan and olive, so you don't need to worry about standing out like a crossing guard when you are wearing them (though I do hear that a safety orange offering will be debuting soon). With the Lymeex gaiters—affordable, effective, and comfortable—I can tell you that for this birder, the days of tucking my pant legs into my socks are over! 🦋

Ben Lizdas has 16 years of experience in the birding optics business and is the ad sales director for Bird Watcher's Digest. Lymeex tick gaiters are in stock at RedstartBirding.com.