

## **Mosquito Control Update**

### **April 25, 2013**

Adult mosquito activity still remains below normal for this time of year, due mainly to below average temperatures. Recent rainfalls have been responsible for producing some medium size broods of floodwater mosquitoes in woodland areas. Biologists and mosquito control inspectors have treated many of these floodwater mosquito breeding sites throughout the parish as a pre-hatch. The product used is Altosid XR Briquets, which is an insect growth regulator. The briquets are applied to known floodwater mosquito breeding habitats and slowly release the insect growth regulator when the breeding sites are flooded by rainfall. The briquets provide control for up to five months.

Truck mounted sprayers have been employed on warmer nights when adult mosquitoes are more active. Over the past couple of weeks, practically all areas of the parish have received a treatment. Spray trucks were not dispatched when night time temperatures were below about 55 degrees, because of the relative inactivity of the adult mosquitoes. High winds at night have also hampered some spray truck treatments. The product label states that the material cannot be applied when winds are in excess of 10 miles per hour.

The larviciding of roadside ditches to control the southern house mosquito, *Culex quinquefasciatus* has been ongoing since the beginning of February. Much emphasis is placed on the control of this mosquito species because it is the primary vector for West Nile virus. Controlling the larva, or aquatic stage is a primary means in which we control this species. So far this year, the breeding index of the southern house mosquito has been very low. The spring is a critical time when the West Nile virus begins to build up in the mosquito and bird populations, so working to maintain low levels of the southern house mosquito could help to reduce the potential for West Nile virus during the summer months.

So far this year a total of 378 mosquito pools have been tested for the presence of West Nile virus and all have returned negative. Many of those tested have been the southern house mosquito. Gravid traps and CDC light traps are set out at various locations throughout the parish 2-3 times each week to collect live adult mosquitoes for West Nile virus testing. Low numbers of mosquitoes have been collected, again due to below average mosquito activity.

As warm temperatures become more consistent, mosquito activity will increase, and more control activities will be employed.