

Mosquito Control Update

April 8, 2014

Adult mosquito activity has been unusually low due to cool temperatures, as indicated by New Jersey and CDC light trap and gravid trap collections. Recent rainfalls over the past few weeks have produced floodwater mosquito breeding, however mosquito larval development has been delayed due to the cool temperatures. The predominate species involved is *Aedes vexans*, the inland floodwater mosquito. Breeding of this mosquito species has been throughout the parish, but especially in the Covington and Mandeville areas. *Aedes sticticus*, another floodwater species, is breeding at moderate levels in the low lying woodland areas in the Sixth Ward. Mosquito control inspectors have treated many of the sites throughout the parish with methoprene briquets, which provides about five months of larval control. Methoprene is not a conventional insecticide, but a biorational product that mimics the mosquito juvenile hormone and keeps the developing mosquito in the larval stage. The material is slowly released into the water, when the breeding site is flooded, to provide larval control. The District typically distributes methoprene briquets throughout the parish in known breeding sites in late winter and early spring.

The larviciders that treat the roadside ditches for the control of *Culex quinquefasciatus*, the southern house mosquito, returned back to work the third week of February. Although the larval counts in the roadside ditches are very low, they are treating positive breeding sites to prevent large buildup of larval populations when temperatures warm. Much emphasis will be directed for the control of this species, due to its medical importance in the transmission of West Nile virus.

So far this year a total of 208 mosquito pools have been tested for West Nile virus and all have returned negative. The testing of mosquito pools is an early warning system that is intended to alert us to West Nile virus activity in the parish. Each week adult mosquito collections are made throughout the parish using gravid and CDC light traps from up to 50 locations. The adult mosquito samples are then sent to the LSU Veterinary Diagnostic Lab for analysis.