

Mosquito Control Update

August 25, 2009

Test results for mosquito pools collected August 11 – 17 indicated four positive for West Nile virus out of 64 tested. All of the positive pools were in the southern house mosquito. Two of the pools were collected from two locations in Mandeville, one from Pearl River and one from Covington. The week before we received five positive pools out of 75 submitted for testing. Locations of the West Nile virus positive pools received special spraying. It is always the policy of the District to direct more treatment in the areas where the positive pools are collected. In addition, biologists and inspectors check the areas for mosquito breeding. When breeding is detected, those sites are treated to control the mosquito larvae. There were no human cases of West Nile virus reported last week.

Toward the end of last week, the salt marsh mosquito problem was greatly improved. Aerial spraying to control these mosquitoes was employed from coastal areas of east Slidell to Mandeville. Additional truck spraying was conducted throughout the week, especially in the areas in the southern part of the parish where these mosquitoes were in moderate to large numbers. It is expected that with more rain and/or high tides, the area will experience more emergence of the salt marsh mosquito.

Mosquito larva inspection data as well as gravid trap collections indicated a substantial decrease in the southern house mosquito, the primary carrier of the West Nile virus. Last week the breeding index for this mosquito was 4.2, as compared to 5.9 the week before. The average number of mosquitoes collected in the 28 gravid traps was 39, as compared to 87 the week before. The numbers last week indicate low population levels of the southern house mosquito. Hopefully, this trend will continue or at least remain the same.

Unfortunately, the Asian tiger mosquito still remains of concern. It remains one of the predominate species in the parish. It is the species that breeds in the artificial containers commonly found in and around residential yards and businesses. It is not practical for District personnel to inspect all of the yards in the parish, so it is hoped that residents and business owners will survey their property for any water holding containers. These containers should be stored where they do not hold water. The Asian tiger mosquito is a competent vector for West Nile virus, and earlier in the year two mosquito pools of this species returned positive from the parish. Circumstantial evidence suggests that the Asian tiger mosquito could have been involved in the four human cases in the parish. It is easy to control the adults of the Asian tiger mosquito, but unless the breeding in the containers is abated, each day more adults will emerge.