

## **Mosquito Control Update**

### **August 4, 2014**

The St. Tammany Parish Mosquito Abatement District received results from the LSU Veterinary Diagnostic Lab that indicated 14 mosquito pools were positive for West Nile virus (WNV) out of 78 tested. A mosquito pool consists of 5-50 adult mosquitoes collected from a given location and tested as one sample or pool. The positive pools were collected from 12 locations with 6 from the Slidell area, two from the Mandeville area, two from the Covington area, two from the Abita Springs area, one from Pearl River, and one from the community of St. Tammany. Nine of the positive pools were collected from the Southern House Mosquito, two were collected from the Asian Tiger Mosquito, two were collected from a marshland breeding mosquito, *Culex salinarius*, and one was collected from the Inland Floodwater mosquito. Up until these recent results, there have only been 14 positive mosquito pools collected out of 1323 tested, with all the previous 14 reported over a period of one month. Last week the Department of Health and Hospitals reported one human case of WNV from the Madisonville area. The positive mosquito pools indicate that the WNV is present in St. Tammany Parish and mainly in the Southern House Mosquito, the primary vector for WNV. West Nile virus involves a bird-mosquito cycle. Birds pick up the virus from the bite of an infected mosquito when fed upon. Once infected, it can then pass on the virus to non-infected mosquitoes when fed upon.

The Southern House Mosquito breeds almost exclusively in roadside ditches that contain high organic content commonly found in residential areas, where homes rely on filter beds and septic tanks for waste water treatment. The Mosquito Abatement District places great emphasis on the control of the Southern House Mosquito by treating the ditches every 5-7 days to prevent adult mosquito emergence. Over the past week, the breeding level of this species has decreased to a low of 2.8 larvae per dip. If left unchecked, population levels in the ditches can explode to as high as 100-200 per dip. In addition to the larval controls, ground and aerial treatments have been targeted against adults of this species as well as the other positive species. Last week, all of the positive locations were sprayed by either aircraft or truck mounted sprayers or both. The District will continue this week to provide controls throughout the Parish, with special emphasis on the positive WNV locations. Adult mosquito surveillance data indicates that the adult mosquito populations are at the lowest levels since early spring.

Residents should take special care to prevent the Southern House Mosquito from entering their homes. It is active at night and will readily fly indoors.

The Asian Tiger Mosquito is another species that is capable of transmitting WNV and is common to the area. This mosquito breeds in artificial containers commonly found in and around yards. Residents are urged to survey their yards for any containers that will hold water and discard them or store them where they will not collect water. These mosquitoes will only fly about 50 yards from their breeding site, so if an individual is experiencing a problem with them, the source is close by.

As a precaution, residents should apply mosquito repellent containing DEET when going into mosquito prone areas. Be sure to follow the label directions.

