

Mosquito Control Update

August 6, 2012

West Nile virus activity has increased over the past two weeks. The District has received record levels of mosquito pools positive for West Nile virus since early June. The positive mosquito pools have been collected throughout the parish. Over the past two weeks the District received 25 positive pools out of 131 tested. All were found in *Culex quinquefasciatus*, the southern house mosquito, except for 4 that were isolated from *Aedes albopictus*, the Asian tiger mosquito. Over the past two weeks, the Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals informed the District of 5 Neuro invasive (NID) West Nile virus illnesses in humans and 2 West Nile virus fever cases. The NID cases were from Mandeville, Hickory, and Pearl River. The fever cases were from Pearl River and Abita Springs. For the year, there have been 5 confirmed NID cases, two fever cases, and one asymptomatic case in St. Tammany Parish. Typically, symptoms of the disease will not appear until 7-10 days after being bitten by an infected mosquito. Statistics indicate that 90% of all West Nile virus infections will result in no symptoms. Only 1 in 150 infections will result in the NID case, the severe form of the disease. Last week's mosquito pool results indicated that the infection levels in the mosquitoes have declined, however this decrease may not represent a trend.

The District continues to respond with targeted and stepped-up controls against the southern house mosquito, the primary vector for West Nile virus. Controls are also especially targeted against the Asian tiger mosquito, which is also a capable vector for West Nile virus. Over the past two weeks, the District has aerially sprayed 163,362 acres throughout St. Tammany Parish. Truck mounted sprayers treated the entire District over the past two weeks and most locations were treated twice. Larviciders continue to treat the roadside ditches for the control of the immature stage of the southern house mosquito. This type of treatment is our primary method for the control of this mosquito species. The roadside ditches that breed the southern house mosquito are treated once a week to help prevent adult mosquito emergence.

Most of the service calls that the District received over the past 3 weeks have been for the Asian tiger mosquito. This mosquito has become more prevalent due to the increase in rainfall. This species breeds exclusively in artificial containers such as cans, buckets, vases, tires and anything else that will hold water. Because the West Nile virus has been isolated several times from the Asian tiger mosquito this year, residents are urged to discard any containers in the yard that will hold water, or store them where they will not collect water. This mosquito does not migrate far from its breeding source, so if someone is experiencing a problem with the Asian tiger mosquito, chances are that they are breeding very close by.

The peak activity for West Nile virus is July and August. Residents are urged to protect themselves when in mosquito prone areas by the use of mosquito repellants containing DEET and wearing long sleeve shirts and long pants. When using mosquito repellants, label directions should be carefully followed.