

## Mosquito Control Update

August 8, 2017

The St. Tammany Parish Mosquito Abatement District was informed by the Department of Health and Hospitals (DHH) of a confirmed human case of West Nile Virus in northern Covington. This is the first confirmed human case in St. Tammany Parish for this year. Last year there was one human case in the Parish.

Thus far we have collected 34 positive mosquito pools out of 3981 pools tested. Most of the positive pools have been collected in the Mandeville, Covington and Madisonville areas. The primary WNV vector is *Culex quinquefasciatus*, commonly known as the southern house mosquito. Populations of this species typically peak from mid-May to mid-June, occurring in roadside ditches where waste water from septic tanks and filter beds are discharged into the ditches. During July-September, arboviral transmission of WNV increases dramatically.

WNV is naturally spread from bird-to-bird by mosquito bites. The southern house mosquito prefers to feed on birds and poultry; however, they also readily bite humans, usually toward the middle of the night, indoors and outdoors. We have also collected positive pools of the saltmarsh mosquito, *Culex salinarius*, which primarily bites at dusk and one positive pool of *Ae. albopictus* the Asian tiger mosquito.

We have been actively treating the entire parish with ground and aerial equipment, but have concentrated heavily in the Mandeville, Covington and Madisonville areas. In July, we sprayed 352,865 acres by air and 193,923 acres by ground. We have also treated 368 acres of ground water in an effort to keep larval numbers low. We regularly treat ditches at least once a week. We do not use pesticides in our water treatments. Instead we either apply a light mineral oil, or one of several biological control agents that is specific to mosquito larvae.

We urge all citizens of St. Tammany Parish to take precautions when in mosquito prone areas. When going outside, wear mosquito repellents such as Deet or Picaridin. Follow the recommendations on the label when using these products. Keep doors and screens closed as much as possible. Wear long sleeve shirts and pants, when spending time outdoors.