

Mosquito Control Update

July 1, 2013

Test results received from the LSU Veterinary Diagnostic Lab on Friday indicated 6 positive mosquito pools out of 100 tested. All of the positive pools were detected in *Culex quinquefasciatus*, the southern house mosquito. Five of the pools were collected from the Covington area and one was from Mandeville. These are the first positive mosquito pools collected for this year out of 895 tested. The southern house mosquito breeds almost exclusively in roadside ditches that have a high degree of organic matter. These conditions are common in locations where individual residential waste water treatment is accomplished by septic tanks and filter beds. The southern house mosquito prefers to bite at nighttime. It is not an aggressive biter. It will readily enter the house when doors or windows are opened. The District's primary method of control for this mosquito species is larvicide. This is accomplished by treating the ditches in order to prevent adult mosquito emergence. The primary product used for control is *Bacillus thuringiensis israelensis*, (*Bti*). This product is a bacterial spore that causes mortality to the mosquito larvae when it is ingested. Treatment of the roadside ditches is performed every 5-7 days. Population levels of the southern house mosquito have been moderately high, due in part to low rainfall lately. With little introduction of fresh water from rainfall into the ditches, high organic content builds. This condition makes the habitat increasingly more favorable for the production of the southern house mosquito.

Last week an aerial adulticide treatment was applied in the greater Covington and Mandeville areas. This treatment, which included 41,000 acres, covered the locations of the positive mosquito pools. An additional aerial adulticide treatment was performed in Lacombe. Also, truck mounted ULV sprayers were employed throughout the parish.

Residents are encouraged to check their yards for artificial containers that can hold water and breed mosquitoes. The Asian tiger mosquito, another competent vector for West Nile virus, breeds exclusively in containers that hold water, such as old discarded tires, cans, flower vase saucers, buckets, etc. Residents should also take precautions to avoid mosquito bites when in mosquito prone areas, by using a mosquito repellent that contains DEET.