

Mosquito Control Update

July 14, 2011

Relatively dry conditions continued over the past few weeks. Average rainfall for the month of June was 3.48 inches or 1.62 inches below normal. Rainfall for the year is 15.05 inches below normal for the Parish. The District monitors 67 rain gauges stationed throughout the Parish. It is not surprising that much of the woodland breeding sites have continued to remain dry, in spite of the scattered showers the area has been receiving. Woodland pools must remain flooded at least 4-5 days so mosquito larvae have time to develop and emerge as adults. As a result of the dry conditions, most woodland breeding sites that have received rainfall, have not remain flooded long enough to produce mosquitoes. However, some freshwater ditches have held rain water long enough to produce *Aedes vexans*, the inland floodwater mosquito. Many of these areas have been larvicided to prevent adult mosquito emergence.

The primary species of concern continues to be *Culex quinquefasciatus*, the southern house that breeds in the roadside septic ditches. Since these ditches receive effluent from household waste water treatment systems, the southern house mosquito has an excellent habitat for development in these ditches. The breeding index of this species decreased from 9.5 larvae per dip in May to 6.3 larvae per dip over the past several weeks. This decrease in breeding is welcomed news because the West Nile virus season traditionally is June through October and the southern house mosquito is the primary carrier for West Nile virus. As we enter into the peak West Nile virus season, continued emphasis will be placed on the control of this mosquito species. Larvicide is the primary method for controlling the southern house mosquito, however aerial adulticide has been employed periodically in mainly the urban areas and locations that historically have had an incidence of West Nile virus. Aerial treatments over the past few weeks have been conducted in the greater Covington, Mandeville and Slidell areas. In addition, treatments have been conducted regularly throughout the Parish by truck mounted ULV sprayers.

In June, 324 mosquito pools were tested for West Nile virus and all returned negative. The District is awaiting the results of 71 more samples which will arrive in a day or two.