

Mosquito Control Update

July 31, 2013

The Louisiana State Department of Health and Hospitals (DHH) informed Mosquito Abatement District officials of a confirmed West Nile virus fever case from the Covington area. Symptoms of West Nile virus fever are mild, and can include fever, headaches, body aches, occasionally a skin rash on the trunk of the body, and sometimes swollen lymph glands. West Nile virus fever generally lasts only a few days. Over the past six weeks, West Nile virus activity has been detected from the Covington area in 10 mosquito pool samples. A total of 11 mosquito pool samples have tested positive out of 1171 tested so far this year. All of the mosquito samples were collected from throughout the parish. The West Nile virus cycle involves a mosquito-bird interaction. When a mosquito bites an infected bird, the mosquito becomes infected with the virus. Once a mosquito is infected, it may transmit the virus to people or animals by biting them. Most mosquito species are not capable of transmitting West Nile virus, because of their inability of amplifying the virus inside their bodies. The primary vector for West Nile virus is the southern house mosquito, *Culex quinquefasciatus*. The southern house mosquito breeds mainly in roadside ditches that have a high degree of organic matter. These ditches are treated every 5-7 days to prevent adult mosquito emergence. Another capable vector of West Nile virus is the Asian tiger mosquito which breeds in artificial containers such as tires, cans, flower pot saucers, buckets or any other container that can hold water.

Extra control efforts have been directed in the Covington and Mandeville areas that include aerial and ground spraying to control the adult mosquitoes and the treatment of roadside ditches and other breeding sites to reduce the larvae stage of the mosquito. Mosquito population levels are relatively low throughout the parish; however residents should take precautions, such as wearing long sleeve shirts and wearing mosquito repellent containing DEET, when in mosquito prone areas. Residents are also urged to survey their yards for the presence of any containers that can hold water. These containers should be emptied every 2-4 days or stored in a place where they cannot collect water.