

Mosquito Control Update

June 29, 2010

Mosquito control activity has continued to be below normal for this time of year as evident by light trap and gravid trap collections, landing rates, and service requests. The parish did experience an increase in *Culex quinquefasciatus*, the southern house mosquito and additional effort was employed for their control. The primary method for control of this species, which is also the primary vector for West Nile virus, is larvicide, or controlling the immature stage of development. Six larvicide trucks are devoted to this task to spray the roadside septic ditches where these mosquitoes breed. The product used for their control is *Bacillus thuringiensis israelensis*, or commonly referred to as *Bti*. This product is a bacterial spore that, when ingested by mosquito larvae, attacks the midgut of the mosquito and causes mortality. *Bti* does not affect any other plant or animal life. It is highly effective in controlling the mosquito larvae. Overall, the breeding index for the southern house mosquito increased from 2.2 last month to 5.1 this month. Even though the breeding more than doubled for June, the populations are still well below normal.

Another species that we are dealing with is *Aedes albopictus*, the Asian tiger mosquito. Practically all of the service requests that we are receiving are for this species. This mosquito will bite during the day and also at night. It breeds exclusively in artificial containers such as tires, cans, pots, vases, or anything that will hold water. It is also a medically important species that is capable of transmitting several diseases, including West Nile virus. Recent rainfalls have increased the incidence of this mosquito. The female mosquito deposits its eggs along the inside of a container, and then hatch when rainfall collects in the container and floods the eggs. As long as containers are allowed to collect water, each time it rains, more mosquitoes can be produced. Residents are urged to survey their yards to remove or cover containers so they do not collect water and breed these mosquitoes.

Ground adulticide was employed throughout the parish. In addition, 107,520 acres were aerielly treated to control adult mosquitoes.