

Mosquito Control Update

May 21, 2012

Over the past three weeks, woodland and marshland floodwater mosquito activity has been greatly reduced. The focus lately has been on the control of *Culex salinarius* and *Anopheles crucians*, two permanent water mosquitoes that breed primarily in the marshland areas. In addition, much emphasis has been on the control of *Culex quinquefasciatus*, the southern house mosquito, which breeds in roadside ditches that contain high levels of organic content.

Culex salinarius and *Anopheles crucians* have exhibited an increase in numbers as compared to the past several years. Hurricane Katrina destroyed a great deal of the marshland habitat where these mosquitoes breed, however, since then, much of it has been restored. There have been several occasions where aerial larvacide has been employed to reduce breeding populations in the marsh. Selected areas in the marsh from east Slidell to Madisonville have received one or more aerial treatments. The control strategy is to apply the larvacide for the control of the immature stage of development followed that night with an aerial adulticide application to reduce the adult mosquito numbers, so as to reduce future mosquito breeding. *Culex salinarius* can provide much annoyance. It typically is active for about one hour after dusk. It is relatively inactive during the daytime. *Anopheles crucians* typically is most active at night.

The control of *Culex quinquefasciatus*, the southern house mosquito, has become more of a concern as the West Nile season approaches. This mosquito species is the primary vector for this disease. Larval counts have been relatively low for the past three weeks, however this week an increase has been observed. The breeding index of this species in roadside ditches over the past three weeks has been 2-3 larval per dip, however that level has risen to 5.8 this week. Extra efforts will be made this week to reduce the larval breeding activity with both larvacide and adulticide measures.

A total of 1362 mosquito pools have been tested for the presence of West Nile virus. Only one has returned positive. Hopefully this will continue, however it is anticipated that in June, activity levels will begin to increase.