

Mosquito Control Update

May 25, 2010

Mosquito populations have begun to increase, but activity still remains below normal for this time of year. *Culex quinquefasciatus*, the southern house mosquito, has gradually displaced *Culex restuans* in roadside septic ditches. It has been highly unusual for *Culex restuans* to be breeding in the roadside ditches, and especially in spring. This species is common almost exclusively during the winter and at no other time of year. The southern house mosquito is the primary vector for West Nile virus. Larviciders have been actively treating the roadside ditches where they breed to keep the populations as low as possible. So far, the breeding index for the southern house mosquito is very low.

The recent rainfalls were responsible for stimulating the hatching of *Aedes vexans*, a floodwater species that breeds in woodland areas, marshland, and freshwater ditches. Some of the breeding areas were larvicided, while others had been treated earlier in the year with altosid XR briquets, a pre-hatch material. The altosid briquets are placed in known floodwater breeding sites in late winter and will last for about 5-6 months. When the area is flooded by rainfall, the altosid material is released into the water to provide effective control against the developing larvae.

Ground adulticide spraying has been employed throughout the month. Coastal areas of the parish have been affected the most by mosquito infestations, but still the levels have been moderate at best. The most common mosquito species that we are dealing with presently are *Culex salinarius* and *Anopheles crucians*, both primarily marshland breeding mosquitoes. In addition, *Aedes vexans* has affected both coastal and inland locations.

So far 431 mosquito pools have been tested by the LSU Veterinary Diagnostic Lab for the presence of West Nile virus, St. Louis and eastern equine encephalitis. All have returned negative.