



The Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station

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PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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State Reports First Positive Mosquitoes for EEE Virus in Stonington

Continued detection of West Nile virus in mosquitoes from 7 Connecticut towns

New Haven – The State of Connecticut Mosquito Management Program (MMP) announced that mosquitoes trapped in Stonington on August 5 tested positive for eastern equine encephalitis (EEE) virus. These results represent the first EEE positive mosquitoes identified in the state by the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station (CAES) this year. In addition, West Nile virus (WNV) infected mosquitoes have been identified in 7 Connecticut towns this year: Bridgeport, Darien, Greenwich, Guilford, Newington, Norwalk, and Stamford. Connecticut residents are reminded to protect themselves from mosquito bites and mosquito-borne diseases.

“The detection of EEE virus in mosquitoes in early August and the continued spread of West Nile virus is cause for concern,” said Dr. Philip Armstrong, Medical Entomologist at the CAES. “Virus activity can quickly escalate so we’ll continue to closely monitor mosquitoes for further virus amplification and spread.”

“Now is the time to take precautions against mosquito bites,” said Dr. Jason White, Director of the CAES. “We encourage everyone to take simple measures such as wearing mosquito repellent and covering bare skin, especially during dusk and dawn when mosquitoes are most active.”

To reduce the risk of being bitten by mosquitoes residents should:

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PORTAL.CT.GOV/CAES

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- Minimize time spent outdoors between dusk and dawn when mosquitoes are most active.
- Be sure door and window screens are tight-fitting and in good repair.
- Wear shoes, socks, long pants, and a long-sleeved shirt when outdoors for long periods of time, or when mosquitoes are more active. Clothing should be light colored and made of tightly woven materials that keep mosquitoes away from the skin.
- Use mosquito netting when sleeping outdoors or in an unscreened structure and to protect small babies when outdoors.
- Consider the use of mosquito repellents recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), such as ones containing DEET, picaridin, oil of lemon eucalyptus, IR3535, or 2-undecanone, and apply according to directions, when it is necessary to be outdoors.

Last season, EEE was detected in 28 communities in Connecticut with a total of 122 positive mosquito samples. There were four confirmed human cases of EEE and three individuals died. Most virus activity occurred in Middlesex, New London, and Windham Counties consistent with prior years. EEE is a rare but serious illness in humans with 4-8 cases reported in a typical year in the U.S. During 2019, the number of confirmed human cases rose to 38 with 19 cases occurring in New England. EEE is the most severe mosquito-transmitted disease in the U.S. with approximately 33 percent mortality and significant brain damage in most survivors.

West Nile virus is the most prevalent mosquito-borne disease in the U.S. and has been detected in Connecticut every year since 1999. Last year, CAES detected WNV in 82 mosquito samples from 23 towns. The majority of WNV activity was detected in densely populated urban and suburban regions in Fairfield, Hartford and New Haven Counties, consistent with prior years.

Connecticut Mosquito Management Program

The response to mosquito transmitted diseases in Connecticut is a collaborative inter-agency effort involving the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP), the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station (CAES) the Department of Public Health (DPH), the Department of Agriculture and the Department of Pathobiology at the University of Connecticut (UCONN). These agencies are responsible for monitoring mosquito populations and the potential public health threat of mosquito-borne diseases.

The CAES maintains a network of 108 mosquito-trapping stations in 87 municipalities throughout the state. Mosquito traps are set Monday – Thursday nights at each site every ten days on a rotating basis and then twice a week after detection of virus. Mosquitoes are grouped (pooled) for testing according to species, collection site, and date. Positive findings are reported to local health departments and on the CAES website at <https://portal.ct.gov/CAES/Mosquito-Testing/Introductory/State-of-Connecticut-Mosquito-Trapping-and-Arbovirus-Testing-Program>.

For information on EEE, WNV, what can be done to prevent getting bitten by mosquitoes, the latest mosquito test results and human infections, visit the Connecticut Mosquito Management Program web site at <https://portal.ct.gov/mosquito>.

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