



The Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station

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123 Huntington Street

New Haven, CT 06511

203.974.8500

Toll free: 1.877.855.2237

Fax: 203.974.8502

Email: [caes@ct.gov](mailto:caes@ct.gov) • [portal.ct.gov/caes](http://portal.ct.gov/caes)

## PRESS RELEASE

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Wednesday, July 26, 2023

#### MEDIA CONTACTS:

Dr. Philip Armstrong  
The Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station  
Phone: 203-974-8510  
Email: [philip.armstrong@ct.gov](mailto:philip.armstrong@ct.gov)

Dr. Jason White  
The Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station  
Phone: 203-974-8440  
Email: [jason.white@ct.gov](mailto:jason.white@ct.gov)

## State Reports Positive Mosquitoes for West Nile Virus in Wethersfield *First WNV-Positive Mosquito Pools of Season*

**New Haven** – The State of Connecticut Mosquito Management Program (MMP) announced that mosquitoes trapped in Wethersfield on July 17 tested positive for West Nile virus (WNV). These results represent the first WNV positive mosquitoes identified in the state by the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station (CAES) this year. Connecticut residents are reminded to protect themselves from mosquito bites and mosquito-borne diseases.

“The first West Nile virus positive mosquitoes of the season have been identified,” said Dr. Philip Armstrong, Medical Entomologist at the CAES. “The recent rainfall, high humidity, and warm temperatures have increased mosquito activity and West Nile virus is expected to build-up in the weeks ahead. We will continue to closely monitor mosquitoes for virus amplification from now through October.”

"This serves as a reminder for people to take steps to protect themselves from mosquito bites," said Dr. Jason White, Director of the CAES. “We encourage everyone to take precautionary 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:

- 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 infants when outdoors.
- Consider the use of an EPA-approved mosquito repellent and apply according to directions when it is necessary to be outdoors.

Last season, WNV was detected in 185 mosquito pools from 24 towns in six counties in Connecticut. The majority of WNV activity was detected in densely populated urban and suburban regions in Fairfield, Hartford, and New Haven counties. Seven human cases of WNV-associated illness were reported with dates of onset from August 11 to September 20.

### **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 88 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 WNV and EEE, 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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