

Rye Mosquito Control Commission

Monthly Update

August, 2021

The record-setting rain in July, coupled with summer heat, has created the “perfect breeding season” resulting in far more mosquitoes than in recent years. Our vendor, Dragon Mosquito, has had its crews relentlessly treating mosquito larval habitats throughout Rye. Tropical storms such as Henri continue to replenish the water on salt marshes and in fresh water habitats resulting in lots of mosquitoes.

Greenhead flies were also abundant this season. New greenhead fly traps were built; existing ones repaired and over 180 traps were set out on the salt marshes in time for the hatching of greenhead flies in July. Traps are typically removed in September or before the first tropical storm. This year, with the anticipated arrival of Henri, Dragon crews hustled to collect the traps to beat the tropical storm’s arrival.

Tick monitoring is taking place at the Rye Recreation Area and the trails between the Recreation Area, the Cemetery and Parsons Field. Public Notices are posted when spraying for adult mosquitoes or ticks is planned at the schools and athletic fields, as was the case recently when, given the higher incidence of mosquitoes, the Rye Elementary School, Rye Junior High, Parsons Field and the Recreation Area were sprayed by Dragon in anticipation of the start of the school year.

Catch basin mosquitoes carry both West Nile Virus (WNV) and Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE). Hundreds of catch basins in Rye are treated each summer to control the disease-carrying mosquitoes found in this man-made habitat. These same mosquitoes can be found in backyard containers such as buckets, wheelbarrows, tarps, boats, etc... Rye residents are encouraged to be diligent in removing **standing** water in and around the house.

Mosquitoes that are still here in the Fall have a higher probability of carrying diseases such as EEE, WNV and Jamestown Canyon Virus (JCV). None have been detected in 2021 in Rye.

- EEE is considered the deadliest arbovirus in North America. EEE is capable of infecting a wide range of animals including mammals, birds, reptiles and amphibians. NH has identified 15 human cases since 2004, none to-date in 2021.
- WNV continues to be the leading cause of domestically acquired arboviral infection in the US. While human cases in NH have been rare, mosquitoes have tested positive for WNV in NH almost every summer since the virus arrived in 2001, including one batch from Salem, NH in 2021.
- JCV circulates primarily between deer and a variety of mosquito species and can infect humans. The illness is considered serious, but rare. NH has identified 16 human cases of JCV with two deaths since 2013, including one adult in Dublin, NH in 2021. JVC has also been detected in mosquitoes from Bow, Canterbury, Derry, Dunbarton and Kingston.

There are no vaccines to prevent vector-borne diseases; treatment consists of supportive care. Many people infected with arboviral disease do not have symptoms. For people with symptoms, the time from mosquito bite to feeling sick ranges from a few days to two weeks. Initial symptoms can include fever, fatigue, and headache. Mosquito-borne viruses JCV, WNV, EEE and the tick-borne virus Powassan can cause encephalitis or meningitis. Symptoms of encephalitis or meningitis include stiff neck, confusion, loss of coordination, difficulty speaking, or seizures.

The best way to prevent infection from mosquito-borne virus is to prevent mosquito bites. Stay vigilant when outside. Protect yourself by using an EPA approved mosquito repellent, avoid exposure at dawn and dusk when mosquitoes are most active, wear long pants and long sleeves, and remove standing water from around your home that mosquitoes need to lay eggs.

Mosquito trapping and disease testing at the State Lab in Concord will continue until mid-October. Treatment of mosquito larvae in wetlands is ongoing. The threat of mosquitoes carrying disease won’t diminish until late fall or when there have been two hard freezes.