



MOSQUITO AND VECTOR CONTROL
ASSOCIATION OF CALIFORNIA
1215 K Street, Suite 940
Sacramento, CA 95814

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Contact: Catherine Smith
(916) 440-0826
casmith@mvcac.org

DISTRICTS FIGHT TWO NEW INVASIVE AND DISEASE CARRYING MOSQUITO SPECIES WHILE WEST NILE VIRUS ACTIVITY INCREASES THROUGHOUT THE STATE

SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA. Two new invasive mosquito species found in California are making it more difficult for mosquito control districts to protect the public from the biting insects. At the same time, counties in nearly every region of the state are reporting West Nile virus activity, including the first confirmed fatality as well as both mosquitoes and birds testing positive for the disease. "Now more than ever, it is imperative for everyone to protect themselves against mosquitoes," said Catherine Smith, executive director of the Mosquito and Vector Control Association of California (MVCAC). "Everyone needs to recognize that all it takes is the bite of a single infected mosquito for a person to become seriously ill," added Smith.

The detection of *Aedes aegypti* (the yellow fever mosquito) in Fresno and Madera counties this month is complicating mosquito control efforts and makes public cooperation a critical component to eradicating the yellow fever mosquito. This mosquito is not native to California and is an efficient carrier of diseases such as dengue, yellow fever, and chikungunya. *Aedes aegypti* is a small, dark mosquito with white markings and banded legs. It may be active around dusk but bites most often during the day and readily enters homes for shelter and to bite people.

Aedes aegypti joins *Aedes albopictus* (the Asian tiger mosquito) as a new vector and public health threat in California. Just two years ago, the Asian tiger mosquito was found in the cities of El Monte and South El Monte in Los Angeles County. The day-biting Asian tiger mosquito is characterized by its small size and the black and white stripes across its body and legs. This mosquito also can transmit various vector-borne diseases such as dengue and chikungunya. Southern California mosquito control agencies have been working aggressively to control and eradicate this invasive species.

These new vector challenges to public health in California coincide with a national effort to raise awareness about mosquitoes and the diseases they transmit. The American Mosquito Control Association (AMCA) has declared this week as National Mosquito Control Awareness Week. Since 1935, the AMCA, an international organization of nearly 2,000 public health professionals, has been dedicated to preserving the public's health and well-being through safe and environmentally sound mosquito control programs.

AMCA and MVCAC ask that all Californians:

- Drain any standing water where mosquitoes could lay their eggs
- Empty and/or discard containers that hold water, including old tires
- Avoid being outdoors when mosquitoes are present
- Dress appropriately by wearing long sleeves and pants when outside
- Defend against mosquitoes by using DEET or other EPA-registered repellents
- Be sure window and door screens are in good repair to prevent mosquitoes from entering the home

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The Mosquito and Vector Control Association of California is a nonprofit association with a mission to provide quality public information, comprehensive mosquito and vector-borne disease surveillance, training to high professional standards and effective legislative advocacy on behalf of California mosquito and vector control districts.