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WNV Detected in Mosquito Pools in Vermont

BURLINGTON – Three batches of mosquitoes from Springfield, Vt. tested positive for West Nile virus by the Health Department laboratory. This is the first detection of West Nile virus this year in Vermont.

The mosquitoes were collected by the Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets on July 22.

West Nile virus is spread through the bite of an infected mosquito. The first human case of West Nile virus was reported in 2002, and the virus has been detected in every county in the state.

Three people became ill with the infection in 2012.

“Finding mosquitoes with West Nile virus this time of year is not unusual,” said Patsy Kelso, state epidemiologist for infectious disease. “Late summer is when the risk of human illness is highest, so we’re reminding everyone to talk precautions to avoid mosquito bites.”

A total of 1,581 batches of mosquitoes have been tested for West Nile Virus and Eastern Equine Encephalitic (EEE) beginning on June 4. There have been no positive samples of EEE so far this year.

Mosquito surveillance was increased in response to the two fatal human cases of EEE that occurred in 2012.

Preventive steps everyone can take include:

1. Limit your time outside from dusk to dawn when mosquitoes are most active.
2. Wear long sleeves and long pants when outdoors while mosquitoes are biting.
3. Use insect repellents that are labeled as effective against mosquitoes. Use repellents containing no more than 30 percent DEET for adults and children. Do not use DEET on infants younger than 2 months of age.
4. Get rid of standing water, and drain areas where water can pool: rain gutters, wading pools, old tires, etc.
5. Install or repair screens on windows and doors to keep mosquitoes out.

Symptoms of West Nile virus are often mild, but can include high fever. Approximately 1 percent of people who are infected develop severe illness affecting the central nervous system, such as encephalitis or meningitis, which can be fatal.