



NEWS RELEASE

FOR INFORMATION CONTACT:

Caroline Calderone Baisley
Director of Health
Tel [203] 622-7836

or

Michael S. Long, Director
Division of Environmental Services
Tel. [203] 622-7838

For Immediate Release
August 13, 2008

MOSQUITOES CARRYING WEST NILE VIRUS IN GREENWICH RAISE CONCERN WHEN ALL TESTING SITES COME UP POSITIVE

The State of Connecticut Mosquito Management Program notified Greenwich health officials yesterday that pools of mosquitoes trapped in Greenwich in the beginning of August have tested positive for West Nile Virus (WNV). These mosquitoes are in addition to the first positive mosquitoes identified by the Connecticut Agriculture Experiment Station (CAES) in Greenwich in mid-July and come from two other testing locations. In addition to Greenwich, 4 new towns in the state, New Canaan, Shelton, Westport and Wilton, have been added to the list of municipalities that have positive mosquitoes for West Nile Virus. The State Mosquito Management Program traps and tests mosquitoes at three site locations in Greenwich (Old Greenwich, Riverside and Central Greenwich) as part of its program, which maintains a network of 91 mosquito-trapping stations in 72 municipalities throughout the state.

Including the new locations, positive mosquitoes have been identified in 20 towns – Bridgeport, Darien, East Haven, Fairfield, Glastonbury, Greenwich, Hamden, Hartford, Milford, New Canaan, New Haven, Norwalk, Shelton, Stamford, Stonington, Stratford, West Haven, Westport, Wethersfield and Wilton. A resident of Sherman who became ill in June is the only human case thus far to test positive for WNV infection.

“The expanding number of towns with positive mosquitoes along with infected mosquitoes being collected from multiple trapping sites within the community is beginning to concern me,” stated Caroline Calderone Baisley, Director of Health. “When the virus appeared much earlier than usual we realized that this could be a long season; however, the summer is not over yet. We will continue to have warm weather in the upcoming weeks with a chance of significant rainfall events. Historically, at least over the last few years, the fall has

been warm, with the first frost coming sometime in November. As it stands right now, the potential for virus transmission to the general public is increasing rapidly, but could become more severe if adult mosquito populations explode with infection. At this time it is important for all residents to know about WNV and for the Town to continue larviciding; however, if the problem escalates, other measures to protect human health will need to be considered.”

WNV is spread to humans by the bite of an infected mosquito, which becomes infected when it bites a bird carrying the virus. West Nile virus is **not** spread by person-to-person contact or directly from birds to people. Although there is no specific treatment or cure, the symptoms and complications of the disease can often be treated. Most people who become ill recover. When bitten by an infected mosquito, most people are able to fight off the infection and experience either mild symptoms, such as headache and fever, or no symptoms at all. In a minority of infected persons, especially those over 50 years old, West Nile Virus can cause serious illness, including encephalitis and meningitis. Infection leads to death in 3 to 15 percent of persons with severe forms of the illness.

In some individuals, including the elderly and persons with compromised immune systems, WNV can cause serious illness that affects the central nervous system. At its most serious, it can cause permanent neurological damage and can be fatal. General symptoms occur suddenly between 5 – 15 days following the bite of an infected mosquito and range from a slight fever, headache, rash, swollen lymph nodes, nausea, malaise and eye pain, to the rapid onset of severe headache, high fever, stiff neck, disorientation, severe muscle weakness, gastrointestinal symptoms, coma or death. Residents are encouraged to see a physician immediately if they develop any of these sudden symptoms.

The Town of Greenwich continues the fight against West Nile Virus by larviciding public and private roadway catch basins, public school ground catch basins and other property owned and operated by the Town as needed. This year’s program began in June and will continue into the fall by reapplying larvicide every four to six weeks. Acting Director of Environmental Services Robert Farfaglia stated, “controlling the mosquito population in the larval stage through the application of larvicide has been proven effective; however, this measure only reduces the mosquito population, not eliminate it. At this point, the best way to protect yourself against WNV is to practice personal protection measures.” The following precautions should be taken seriously:

- Minimize time spent outdoors when mosquitoes are most active, especially at dawn and dusk.

- Be sure door and window screens are tight-fitting and in good repair.
- Wear shoes, socks, long pants and long-sleeved shirts when outdoors when mosquitoes are active. Clothing should be light colored and made of tightly woven materials that keep mosquitoes away from the skin.
- Avoid sleeping outdoors and only sit in screened structures when spending extensive time outdoors.
- Protect babies and small children with mosquito netting when they are in the carriage.
- Use mosquito repellent, according to directions, when it is necessary to be outdoors.
- After returning indoors, wash any treated skin with soap and water.

Greenwich residents are also urged to continue to participate in the Town's mosquito control efforts by eliminating areas of standing water around their homes which includes:

YARD AND HOME CHECKLIST

- ✓ Get rid of old tires, tin cans, buckets, drums, bottles or any water holding containers.
- ✓ Encourage neighbors to eliminate breeding sites on their properties.
- ✓ Fill in or drain any low places (puddles, ruts) in yard.
- ✓ Keep rain gutters, drains, ditches and culverts clean of weeds and trash so water will drain properly.
- ✓ Cover trash containers to keep out rainwater.
- ✓ Repair leaky pipes and outside faucets.
- ✓ Empty plastic wading pools daily if possible and store indoors when not in use.
- ✓ Make sure your backyard pool is properly chlorinated every day.
- ✓ Fill in tree rot holes and hollow stumps that hold water with sand or concrete.
- ✓ Change the water in birdbaths and plant pots or drip trays at least once every few days.
- ✓ Keep grass cut short and shrubbery well trimmed around the house so adult mosquitoes cannot hide there.

- ✓ Eliminate collected water in boat or pool covers.
- ✓ Ponds and stagnant water bodies that do not support fish, frogs or other amphibians that eat mosquito larvae may be treated with a biological control agent such as *Bacillus thuringiensis israelensis* (BTI). It is suggested that the Department of Health or the Department of Conservation be contacted when treatment is considered.

For more information about the Town's larviciding program, personal protection and property management recommendations, the State of Connecticut mosquito management program, the following contact sites are available.

The Town of Greenwich Mosquito Management Brochure is available throughout the community and on the Town's Website.

Greenwich Department of Health Division of Environmental Services	www.greenwichct.org (203) 622-7838
Greenwich Conservation Commission	(203) 622-6461
Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection Communications Division	(860) 424-4184
DEP Mosquito Management Program Website	www.dep.state.ct.us/mosquito/index.asp
Toll Free Mosquito Information Line	1-866-968-5463
Connecticut Department of Public Health Toxic Hazards Assessment Program	www.dph.state.ct.us (860) 509-7742
Epidemiology Program	(860) 509-7994
Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station Website	(860) 974-8604 www.caes.state.ct.us
Department of Agriculture Website	(860) 713-2505 www.state.ct.us/doag
Westchester County Department of Health Information Line Website	(914) 813-5609 www.co.westchester.ny.us/health
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Website	www.cdc.gov