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**First Pool of Mosquitoes in Stratford Test Positive for West Nile Virus**

Stratford, Connecticut (July 17, 2012) - The Stratford Health Department announced that the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station reported *Culex Pipens* mosquitoes trapped at the Beacon Point on July 16<sup>th</sup>, 2012 have tested positive for West Nile Virus.

“This is earlier than last year’s arrival of positive mosquitoes”, said Andrea Boissevain, Director of Health, “but given the mild winter and wet spring we’ve had, it’s no surprise.” She added that “we can all take the necessary and simple steps to prevent exposure and bites.”

Environmental Conservation Administrator Brian Carey noted that “it is important to remember that the mosquito species that predominantly carries the disease (*Culex pipiens*) prefers to bite birds rather than humans.” He continued, “the best prevention to reduce your risk of catching the disease is to keep mosquitoes out of your home by ensuring your window and door screens are tight and secure.”

The best defense is to get rid of standing water. With the rush of water through the catch basins, recent egg growth can be transported downstream where the larvae will hatch in three to five days. Standing water has become stagnant and a perfect breeding ground for mosquitoes.

The following precautions should be taken to avoid mosquito bites and to decrease mosquito activity around your home:

- Rid your property of extra standing water. Artificial containers such as barrels and birdbaths are frequently used by these species of mosquitoes for laying eggs.
- Tip over items in your recycle bin that can collect water.
- Clean and chlorinate swimming pools that are not being used, including pool covers.
- Clear clogged gutters.
- Drill holes in bottom of recycling containers.
- Fix holes in your screens.
- For commercial properties with flat roofs, please check for standing water to reduce mosquito-breeding sites.
- Minimize time spent outdoors around dusk and dawn when mosquitoes are most active.
- Be sure door and windows 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 most active. Clothing should be light colored and made tightly woven materials that keep mosquitoes away from the skin.
- Use mosquito netting when sleeping outdoors or in an unscreened structure and to protect small babies when outdoors.
- Consider using mosquito repellent, as directed, when outdoors.

Most people who are infected with West Nile Virus and become ill will have a mild illness that may include fever, headache, body aches, nausea, and vomiting or skin rash. Rarely, people



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develop a severe form of the illness that can include neck stiffness, disorientation, loss of consciousness, tremors, muscle weakness and paralysis. Older adults are more likely to have severe health consequences if they become infected with West Nile Virus.

For more information on West Nile Virus and mosquito control, please visit the Stratford Health Department's website at [www.townofstratford.com/health](http://www.townofstratford.com/health).

The Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station also has information for the public on mosquito surveillance control and mosquito-borne diseases. This information can be accessed on their website <http://www.caes.state.ct.us>

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