

2015 Mosquito Season Findings

October 19, 2015: Weekly testing indicated NO findings of EEE or WNV in mosquito samples taken in Topsfield last week.

Summary:

-Most, if not all, of Massachusetts experienced a hard frost during the October 17-19 weekend. Risk of mosquito-borne disease is virtually eliminated by the first local hard frost which kills most remaining adult mosquitos.

-During 2015, in the Tri-Towns, no mosquito pools (from traps) tested positive for EEEV (Eastern Equine Encephalitis Virus) or WNV (West Nile Virus). There were 4,524 mosquito pools tested by MA Department of Public Health from traps throughout MA, including 540 submitted by the Northeast MA Mosquito Control Program. The Tri-Towns each belong to this program. Due to this regional operation, all communities in northeast MA benefit from the annual surveillance data for mosquito management and disease response.

-During 2015, 9 individuals in MA tested positive for WNV. None tested positive for EEEV.

-2015 Risk Levels for Essex County remained at "remote" to "low".

For further information, contact your local Public Health Department:

Topsfield ... John Coulon, 978-887-1520 or health@topsfield-ma.gov

Middleton ... Derek Fullerton, 978-777-1869 or healthdirector@townofmiddleton.org

Boxford ... Kendell Longo, 978-887-6000 or klongo@town.boxford.ma.us

September 30, 2015: Weekly testing indicated NO findings of EEE or WNV in mosquito samples taken in Topsfield last week.

-No change in Tri-Town Risk Levels: Remote to Low.

-Standard Precautions should continue. See below.

-Questions should go to your local Board of Health:

-Topsfield. John Coulon, 978-887-1520 or health@topsfield-ma.gov

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-Boxford. Kendell Longo. 978-887-6000 x507 or klongo@town.boxford.ma.us



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
September 29, 2015

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Omar Cabrera (DPH) [617-624-5089](tel:617-624-5089)

STATE HEALTH OFFICIALS ANNOUNCE FIRST WEST NILE VIRUS FATALITY IN MASSACHUSETTS

Residents urged to take precautions to avoid mosquito bites

BOSTON – Tuesday, September 29, 2015- The Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) today announced the fourth and fifth human cases of West Nile virus (WNV) in the state this year, and the first WNV-related fatality. Both patients are male Suffolk County residents in their 60s who likely contracted the virus in the Suffolk County area. Both men were hospitalized due to the severity of their illness; one case was fatal. Confirmation of these infections came from testing completed at the Massachusetts State Public Health Laboratory.

These newly confirmed cases, in combination with multiple mosquito findings from the area and a previous case with exposure in the same area indicate that risk from WNV is now considered to be high in this area. As such, DPH is elevating the WNV risk levels for Boston, Chelsea, Revere, and Winthrop to High.

“As we enter Fall, and cooler temperatures approach, it’s important to note that Massachusetts still is in peak season for possible West Nile virus infection for human infections,” said State Public Health Veterinarian Dr. Catherine Brown. “Residents need to continue to take steps to protect themselves against mosquito bites: use insect repellent, cover up, and avoid outdoor activities at dusk and after nightfall when mosquitoes are at their most active.”

In 2014, there were six human cases of WNV infection identified in Massachusetts. WNV is usually transmitted to humans through the bite of an infected mosquito. While WNV can infect people of all ages, people over the age of 50 are at higher risk for severe disease. Most people infected with WNV will have no symptoms. When present, WNV symptoms tend to include

fever and flu-like illness. In rare cases, more severe illness can occur. Fewer than one percent of people bitten by an infected mosquito will develop a severe form of WNV in which the virus invades the central nervous system.

People have an important role to play in protecting themselves and their loved ones from illnesses caused by mosquitoes.

Avoid Mosquito Bites

Apply Insect Repellent when Outdoors. Use a repellent with DEET (N, N-diethyl-m-toluamide), permethrin, picaridin (KBR 3023), oil of lemon eucalyptus [p-methane 3, 8-diol (PMD)] or IR3535 according to the instructions on the product label. DEET products should not be used on infants under two months of age and should be used in concentrations of 30% or less on older children. Oil of lemon eucalyptus should not be used on children under three years of age.

Be Aware of Peak Mosquito Hours. The hours from dusk to dawn are peak biting times for many mosquitoes. Consider rescheduling outdoor activities that occur during evening or early morning.

Clothing Can Help Reduce Mosquito Bites. Wearing long-sleeves, long pants and socks when outdoors will help keep mosquitoes away from your skin.

Mosquito-Proof Your Home

Drain Standing Water. Mosquitoes lay their eggs in standing water. Limit the number of places around your home for mosquitoes to breed by either draining or discarding items that hold water. Check rain gutters and drains. Empty any unused flowerpots and wading pools, and change water in birdbaths frequently.

Install or Repair Screens. Keep mosquitoes outside by having tightly-fitting screens on all of your windows and doors.

Protect Your Animals

Animal owners should reduce potential mosquito breeding sites on their property by eliminating standing water from containers such as buckets, tires, and wading pools – especially after heavy rains. Water troughs provide excellent mosquito breeding habitats and should be flushed out at least once a week during the summer months to reduce mosquitoes near paddock areas. Horse owners should keep horses in indoor stalls at night to reduce their risk of exposure to mosquitoes. Owners should also speak with their veterinarian about mosquito repellents approved for use in animals and vaccinations to prevent WNV and EEE. If an animal is diagnosed with WNV or EEE, owners are required to report to DAR, Division of Animal Health by calling [617-626-1795](tel:617-626-1795) and to the Department of Public Health (DPH) by calling [617-983-6800](tel:617-983-6800).

More information, including all WNV and EEE positive results, can be found on the Arbovirus Surveillance Information web page at www.mass.gov/dph/mosquito or by calling the DPH Epidemiology Program at [617-983-6800](tel:617-983-6800).

September 5, 2015 Weekly testing indicated NO findings of EEE or WNV in mosquito samples taken in Topsfield last week.

- Weather patterns continue to support populations of mosquitoes that are responsible for the spread of West Nile Virus.
- Risk levels for all mosquito-borne diseases remain "Remote" to "Low" in the Tri-Towns of Topsfield, Middleton, Boxford.
- Residents in areas where Eastern Equine Encephalitis has been found in recent years, including Pye Brook Park, should be especially diligent about taking precautions.
 - Use insect repellent according to manufacturers' recommendations.
 - Cover as much as possible, particularly at dawn and dusk.
 - Keep screens in good repair.
- Questions? Contact your Local Board of Health:
 - Topsfield: John Coulon, 978-887-1520, health@topsfield-ma.gov
 - Middleton: Derek Fullerton, 978-777-1869 or healthdirector@townofmiddleton.org
 - Boxford: Kendell Longo, 978-887-6000 x172 or klongo@town.boxford.ma.us
- Looking for further information? Start at your Local Board of Health:
 - Topsfield: www.topsfield-ma.gov
 - Middleton: www.townofmiddleton.org
 - Boxford: www.town.boxford.ma.us

August 31, 2015 Weekly testing indicated NO findings of EEE or WNV in mosquito samples taken in Topsfield last week.

- First human case of WNV was detected last week. Resides in Middlesex County.
- No human cases of EEEV have been detected in MA thus far this season.
- September is the time when people are most likely to be exposed to infected mosquitoes
 - Standard precautions should prevail, including
 - Use insect repellent according to manufacturer's recommendations.
 - Dress appropriately, especially at dawn and dusk.
 - Discard open standing water. As little as one cup of water is enough for mosquitoes to lay eggs.
- Risk levels for Tri-Towns remain "remote" to "low". Some level of risk exists in every community.

Questions should be directed to your Local Public Health Official:

Topsfield ... John Coulon at 978-887-1520 or health@topsfield-ma.gov
Middleton ... Derek Fullerton at 978-777-1869 or healthdirector@townofmiddleton.org
Boxford ... Kendell Longo at 978-887-6000 x 172 or klongo@town.boxford.ma.us

August 22, 2015 Weekly testing indicated NO findings of EEE or WNV in mosquito samples taken in Topsfield last week.

- No EEEV positive mosquitoes have been identified in MA thus far this season.
- Although 86 mosquitoes have tested positive for WNV in MA this season, NONE have been detected in northeastern MA north of Reading.
- Continued vigilance is warranted.
 - Eliminate standing water. Report untended swimming pools.
 - Use insect repellants with EPA registered ingredients. Follow manufacturers' recommendations.
 - Dress appropriately. Wear long pants and long sleeves when outdoors especially at dawn and dusk.

-Although 17 MA residents have been diagnosed with a mosquito-borne disease called Chikungunya and 2 MA residents have been diagnosed with Dengue Fever, they are all believed to have contracted it while travelling in southern areas. No mosquitoes have been identified as positive in MA thus far for either disease.

-State-assigned mosquito risk levels for Tri-Town remain at "remote" to "low".

Questions? Contact your Local Board of Health Director:

John Coulon, Topsfield, 978-887-1520 or health@topsfield-ma.gov, www.topsfield-ma.gov

Derek Fullerton, Middleton, 978-777-1869, or healthdirector@townofmiddleton.org, www.townofmiddleton.org, Facebook

Kendell Longo, Boxford, 978-887-6000 x507 or klongo@town.bxford.ma.us, www.town.bxford.ma.us

August 1, 2015 Weekly testing indicated NO findings of EEE or WNV in mosquito samples taken in Topsfield last week.

This summer's weather patterns have produced larger than normal populations of the **mosquitoes** that are responsible for spreading WNV. Multiple WNV infected samples of mosquitoes have been found throughout Boston and many of its' northern suburbs. WNV activity will increase and expand in the area and some risk exists in every community.

Although there have been no EEE infected mosquitoes identified yet, some virus is probably present in birds and mosquitoes. Residents in areas where EEE activity has occurred in previous years should take all precautions to avoid mosquito bites. This includes Pye Brook Park.

Late July, August and early September is the time most people are exposed to infected mosquitoes.

Check your risk levels throughout the season by going to the website www.mass.gov/dph/mosquito and make sure you know what to do to protect yourself.

- Pick a repellent with an EPA-approved active ingredient and follow manufacturer's recommendations.
- Use long sleeves to cover up when possible.
- Repair screens
- Remove standing water to help reduce mosquito populations. When in doubt, contact the Board of Health office. Be vigilant about **unused swimming pools** as these are prime breeding locations.
- Teach children to be aware of mosquito activity around them and how to avoid it.