



MVCAC
Mosquito and Vector Control Association of California

For Immediate Release
June 19, 2015

Media Contact: Jenny Dudikoff
916-224-9429

California's Hot, Dry Summer Calls for Robust Mosquito Abatement
National Mosquito Control and Awareness Week Puts Californians on High Alert

SACRAMENTO, June 19, 2015 – By now, it comes as no surprise to most Californians that the driest year in the state's history has had a number of implications for its residents and communities. However, it may come as a surprise that as a result of these conditions, mosquitoes are prolific and their ability to spread disease is at an all-time high.

Counter to popular belief, the drought has exacerbated mosquito activity. When mosquitoes have less access to natural sources of water, they seek out artificial sources such as those typically found in residential communities, increasing risk of human exposure to mosquito-borne diseases. Last year, the drought contributed to more than 800 cases of West Nile virus (WNV) in California – twice as many as in 2013 - with 561 of those cases involving serious, neuroinvasive illness. In 2014, West Nile virus resulted in more than 30 fatalities in California alone.

June 21 – 27 has been declared National Mosquito Control Awareness Week by the American Mosquito Control Association. This week is intended to educate the general public about the significance of mosquitoes in their daily lives and the important service provided by mosquito control workers throughout the United States and worldwide.

“Californians need to be on high alert. National Mosquito Awareness Week is another opportunity to increase local education and awareness throughout California to help protect residents and communities from potentially fatal mosquito borne diseases,” stated Joel Buettner, President of the Mosquito and Vector Control Association of California (MVCAC). “It is our job to not only protect residents and prevent mosquito transmitted diseases through abatement efforts, but to also share information about how people can take measures to further ensure they aren't victims of preventable illness,” added Buettner.

In addition to California's record-breaking West Nile virus activity in 2014, several exotic mosquito species capable of transmitting deadly diseases have been discovered in California in recent years and are now permanently established in some communities.

Invasive species, capable of transmitting a number of life-threatening diseases including chikungunya, dengue, and yellow fever, pose an increasing threat to Californians. While these diseases have not been locally acquired in California to date, efforts to control these mosquitoes create increasing challenges to vector control agencies statewide.

Mosquito control programs or agencies are absolutely critical to increasing awareness and protecting California's public health. Mosquito abatement efforts would not be possible without mosquito control workers locally, statewide, and across the nation and globe. Local agencies must be more diligent than ever, putting greater emphasis on the dangers of mosquito-borne diseases and mobilizing residents to take all the necessary precautions to protect themselves and their families.

To minimize exposure to mosquito bites and WNV, practice the "3 Ds:"

1. **DEET** – Apply insect repellent containing DEET, picaradin, oil of lemon eucalyptus, or IR3535 according to label instructions. Repellents keep mosquitoes from biting. DEET can be used safely on infants and children 2 months of age and older.
2. **DAWN AND DUSK** – Mosquitoes capable of transmitting WNV are most active in the early morning and evening, so it important to wear protective clothing and repellent if you are outside during these times. Make sure that your doors and windows have tight-fitting screens to keep out mosquitoes. Repair or replace screens with tears or holes.
3. **DRAIN** – Mosquitoes lay their eggs on standing water. Eliminate all sources of standing water on your property, including in flower pots, old car tires and buckets. If you know of a swimming pool that is not being properly maintained, please contact your local mosquito and vector control agency.

MVCAC represents more than 65 special districts and other subdivisions of state and local government which are responsible for mosquito and vector control, surveillance of WNV and other vector-borne diseases, and public education programs to help Californians protect themselves from mosquito-borne disease. Approximately half the land area and 85 percent of the population of California are within the boundaries of a mosquito control program. To these ends, MVCAC advocates safe, effective, and environmentally friendly methods of mosquito and vector control.

###