



**For Immediate Release**

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## **California Mosquito Experts are Concerned This Year's Mosquito Season Will Be Long and Intense**

*Mosquito Awareness Week, observed April 14 -20, 2024, educates California residents about mosquitoes and how to help prevent the spread of mosquito-transmitted diseases*

**SACRAMENTO, APRIL 10, 2024** -- After our state experienced very high West Nile virus activity in 2023, [mosquito experts](#) are concerned that this year could be another long and intense mosquito season. Last year, large weather events such as hurricanes, heavy precipitation, and flooding created additional habitats for mosquitoes to develop. As the weather warms up, the remaining stagnant water creates havens for disease-spreading mosquitoes.

West Nile virus, spread by *Culex* mosquitoes, is the most prevalent and serious disease transmitted by mosquitoes in California. There is no human vaccine for West Nile virus, a disease that can cause debilitating cases of meningitis, encephalitis, and even death. In 2023, there were 428 human West Nile virus disease cases from 34 counties in California, including 19 human deaths. The number of human cases in 2023 was more than double those in 2022.

“Mosquitoes are a serious public health threat, and residents throughout the state must take precautions to protect themselves and their homes,” said Assemblymember Eduardo Garcia, who authored the state resolution (ACR 164) recognizing California Mosquito Awareness Week. “There are simple steps Californians can take to help eliminate mosquitoes and defend themselves against West Nile virus such as dumping and draining standing water in and around their homes. It’s also important to wear an EPA-registered repellent when going outdoors.”

Climate change is also intensifying the spread of invasive mosquitoes. Globally, [2023 was the warmest year on record](#), and last summer, for the first time in California, there were two cases of locally transmitted dengue (in Long Beach and Pasadena). Dengue is transmitted by invasive *Aedes* mosquitoes, and this species of mosquitoes continues to spread rapidly throughout the state. Currently, [invasive mosquitoes have been found in 24 counties](#). Invasive *Aedes* are very hard to control and pose a serious public health threat because they can spread diseases such as dengue, Zika, and chikungunya to people as well as animal heartworm to pets. While there have previously been travel-related dengue cases in the state, this is the first time local transmission has occurred in California and it is now a new reality that mosquito districts have to contend with.

“Last year was a particularly challenging year for mosquito control and 2024 is looking to be equally intense,” said Conlin Reis, president of the [Mosquito and Vector Control Association of California](#). “In many parts of the state, mosquito monitoring and treatment efforts are starting earlier in the year and extending late into fall, creating longer mosquito seasons.”

[Mosquito experts](#) say the future of mosquito control requires innovation, such as using [drones](#), to protect the public from mosquito-borne diseases. Mosquito and vector control agencies in California are also exploring the potential use of other innovative technologies: [Wolbachia](#), [irradiation](#), and [self-limiting mosquitoes](#). More information about the need for innovative technologies and how they work is available on the [MVCAC website](#).

### **Everyone can do their part to help prevent mosquito bites:**

- Apply insect repellent containing an EPA-registered active ingredient, including DEET, picaridin, oil of lemon eucalyptus, or IR3535, to clothes and exposed skin according to label instructions. Repellents keep mosquitoes from biting. It is important to follow product label instructions for the safe use of repellents on children.
- Dress in long sleeves and pants, especially if outside at dawn and dusk when mosquitoes that can spread West Nile virus are most active.
- Install screens on windows and doors and keep them in good repair to keep mosquitoes out of your home.
- Eliminate all sources of standing water on your property, including in flowerpots, old tires, buckets, pet dishes, and trash cans. Mosquitoes lay their eggs in very small amounts of standing water.
- Repair leaking faucets and broken sprinklers that can contribute to standing water around your home.
- Clean rain gutters clogged with leaves.
- Report neglected swimming pools and day-biting mosquitoes to your local mosquito and vector control agency (agency information can be found at [www.mvcac.org](http://www.mvcac.org))

To learn more, please visit the [MVCAC website](#) or the [California Department of Public Health Mosquitoes and Mosquito-Borne Diseases webpage](#).

### **About MVCAC**

*The [Mosquito and Vector Control Association of California](#) (MVCAC) is the statewide voice for mosquito and vector control professionals. The association provides public health information, expertise, mosquito and vector-borne disease surveillance, innovative research, professional training, effective legislative and regulatory advocacy on behalf of California public agencies.*