



Ada County

Pest of the Month



June 2011

**A quick guide to identifying and controlling
invasive plants and animals found in the county**

CULEX MOSQUITOES



Culex Mosquitoes are the most widely distributed mosquito in the world. In the Western United States the most common of the *Culex* vectors are members of the *Culex tarsalis* complex. In Ada County, *Culex tarsalis* species of mosquitoes are the primary concern for West Nile virus.

Quick Facts

- The developmental cycle of a *Culex* mosquito takes 3-14 days depending on the weather. Eggs are laid in rafts and will only hatch in the presence of water. During the larval stage the mosquito lives in water and feeds on organic matter and plants, then develops into a pupa. The pupa, also known as a tumbler, is comma-shaped and also lives in water. It does not feed and becomes an adult after one or two days.
- *Culex tarsalis* feeds both on birds and on mammals and will readily feed on humans. In Ada County, this species is at its population peak in July and August. *Culex* mosquitoes generally feed between dusk and dawn.
- *Culex* usually live only a few weeks during the warm summer months; those females which emerge in late summer search for sheltered areas where they hibernate (diapause) until spring; warm weather brings them out in search of water on which to lay their eggs.



Culex mosquitoes lay their eggs usually at night on the surface of fresh or stagnant water. A mosquito may lay a raft of eggs every third night during its life span. *Culex* mosquitoes lay their eggs one at a time, sticking them together to form a raft of 200-300 eggs. A raft of eggs looks like a speck of soot floating on the water and is about 1/4 inch long and 1/8 inch wide.

See control methods on other side...

How to Control



Survey and Mapping: Mosquito breeding sites like swamps, areas of standing water, and drainage ditches are surveyed and mapped. With the use of computers and GIS, the information gathered is then used to develop resource requirement planning, operational scheduling, larval site history, and adult mosquito population monitoring.

Surveillance and Monitoring: The distribution and density of mosquito species in relation to human populations are surveyed weekly during the prime mosquito months, May thru September, in order to control the threat of disease or nuisance mosquitoes. CO² baited light traps are used throughout the county to measure mosquito population levels and then control efforts are recommended by site.



Larval Control: The control of larvae in known breeding sites prevent the development of adult mosquitoes. The larvicides being used today are environmentally sensitive. They control mosquito larvae, and then degrade rapidly, not leaving residual in the soil, water or air. All treatments meet sound environmental standards.

Adult Control: Adult mosquito control often becomes necessary during periods when the nuisance factor becomes excessive. This can follow periods of heavy rainfall which can cause new mosquito broods to hatch. During these periods of annoyance, ULV cold aerosol misting is used to reduce the adult mosquito population in residential areas. In addition, adult mosquitoes can be eliminated in high-use recreational areas where they tend to congregate, such as parks, golf courses and baseball diamonds.



Public Involvement: Reducing standing water bodies, changing permanent water features every 72 hours (such as birdbaths), or using mosquito dunks can eliminate possible breeding sites of mosquitoes. Notifying the Mosquito Abatement District of increased mosquito populations helps us to determine sites that may need additional treatment or inspection. A well planned, integrated approach will enable us all to enjoy the outdoors and maximize recreational areas we enjoy in the community.



For questions or concerns, please contact :

Ada County Weed, Pest, and Mosquito Abatement

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