The Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station

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PRESS RELEASE

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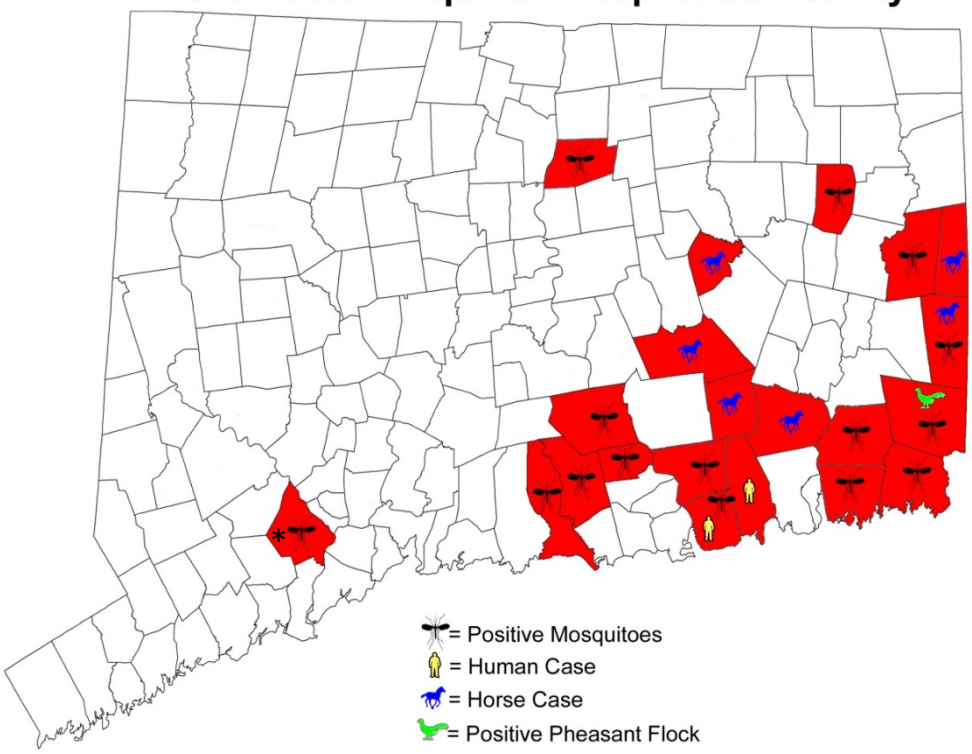
Risk of Eastern Equine Encephalitis Continues: Virus Detected in 21 Connecticut Towns

New Haven, CT – The State Mosquito Management Program is warning Connecticut residents about the risk of infection by eastern equine encephalitis (EEE) this season. So far EEE-infected mosquitoes, horse cases, and human cases of EEE infection have been reported in: Chester, Colchester, Columbia, East Lyme, Groton, Haddam, Hampton, Killingworth, Ledyard, Lyme, Madison, Montville, North Stonington, Old Lyme, Plainfield, Salem, Shelton, South Windsor, Sterling, Stonington, and Voluntown.

"Although mosquito numbers are declining with the onset of cool weather, we continue to detect EEE virus in communities in eastern Connecticut," said Dr. Philip Armstrong, Medical Entomologist at the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station (CAES). "There is continued risk for mosquito-borne diseases until the first hard freeze when mosquito activity ends."

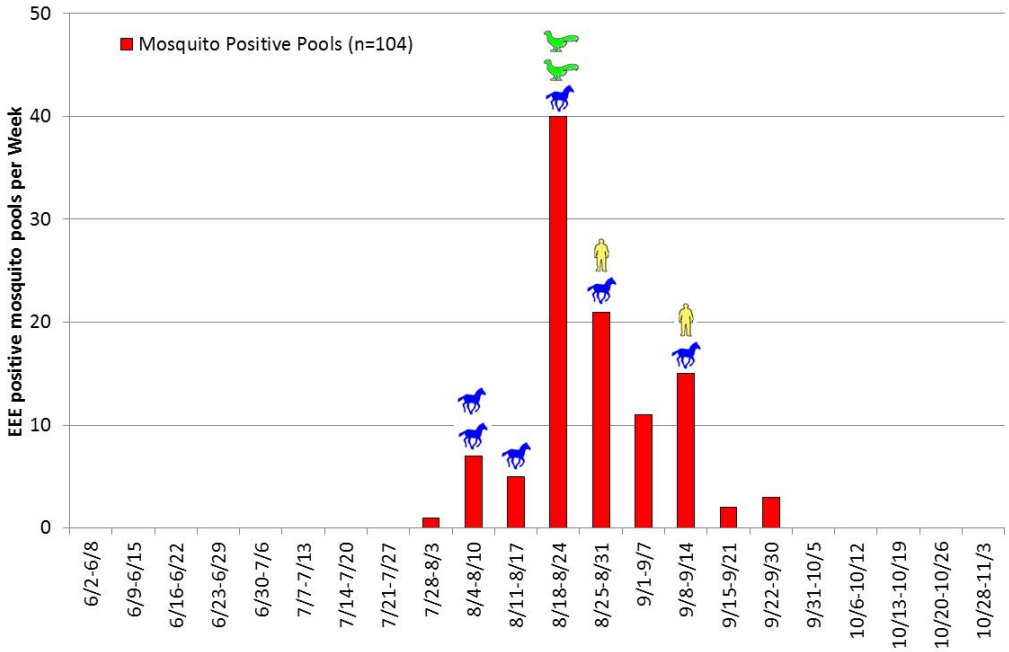
"Mosquitoes are still active and residents should continue to take measures to prevent mosquito bites especially during episodes of unseasonably warm weather as predicted for this weekend," said Dr. Theodore Andreadis, Director of the Center for Vector Biology & Zoonotic Diseases at the CAES. "This includes applying insect repellent and covering bare skin, especially in wooded areas and during dusk and dawn when biting mosquitoes are most active."

2019 Eastern Equine Encephalitis Activity



*The Shelton EEE positive finding in a bird-biting mosquito is from August 26. None of the testing on mosquitoes at that site have yielded EEE virus since then.

2019 Eastern Equine Encephalitis Activity per Week



*Human and animal EEE cases are indicated based on week of disease onset.

Eastern equine encephalitis is a rare but serious mosquito-borne viral disease in people and horses. On average, there are 6 human cases reported each year in the United States. The mortality rate of hospitalized patients is one-third and approximately one-half of survivors suffer from permanent neurological damage. In Connecticut, outbreaks of EEE have occurred sporadically in horses since 1938 and the first locally-acquired human case and fatality occurred in the fall of 2013.

To reduce the risk of being bitten by mosquitoes residents should:

- Minimize time spent outdoors between dusk and dawn when mosquitoes are most active.
- Be sure door and window 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 more active. Clothing should be light colored and made of 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 the use of mosquito repellent, according to directions, when it is necessary to be outdoors.

The State of Connecticut Mosquito Management Program is a collaborative effort involving the Department of Energy & Environmental Protection, the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station, the Department of Public Health, the Department of Agriculture, and the University of Connecticut Department of Pathobiology and Veterinary Science. These agencies are responsible for monitoring the potential public health threat of mosquito-borne diseases.

The CAES maintains a network of 92 mosquito-trapping stations in 72 municipalities throughout the state. Mosquito traps are set Monday – Thursday nights at each site every ten days on a rotating basis. Mosquitoes are grouped (pooled) for testing according to species, collection site, and date. Positive findings are reported to local health departments and on the CAES website at https://portal.ct.gov/CAES/Mosquito-Testing/Introductory/State-of-Connecticut-Mosquito-Trapping-and-Arbovirus-Testing-Program.

For information on West Nile and eastern equine encephalitis viruses and how to prevent mosquito bites, visit the Connecticut Mosquito Management Program Web site at https://portal.ct.gov/mosquito.

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