

# **Mosquito Control: Not that we miss them, but where are the mosquitoes?**

By By JEFFREY C. STIVERS, Special to the Daily News

Saturday, July 22, 2006

The mosquito season of 2005 was a strange one. It started off normally enough, with high numbers of salt marsh mosquitoes invading the area in May. All of the areas routinely invaded by these blood suckers — Marco Island, Isle of Capri, Goodland, southern Naples, and the Henderson Creek area — were swamped.

The Collier Mosquito Control District (CMCD) responded to the invasion by making aerial applications to control the mosquito adults. As usual, CMCD would knock down the adults, only to have them replaced two or three days later by new mosquitoes being blown in from the Everglades. All this was a normal summer for the Naples area.

Then came mid-July and things took a strange turn. All of the storm activity in the Gulf and the Caribbean changed our normal wind pattern, shifting the prevailing wind so that it blew out of the West, instead of the East. Suddenly, there were no more salt marsh mosquitoes plaguing coastal residents. Miami, on the other hand, was suddenly hammered with them.

With an early end to the salt marsh mosquito season, CMCD personnel took advantage of the break in operations and waited for the onset of the fresh-water mosquito season. CMCD personnel waited, and waited, and waited, and finally realized that there really wasn't going to be a fresh-water mosquito season in 2005.

This realization caused considerable head-scratching but no regrets. The last treatment of the regular season was of Marco Island on July 24. Of course, Hurricane Wilma came along later and resulted in several more applications.

That was 2005. Mosquito season 2006 is shaping up to be just as strange, although in a different way.

CMCD Operations personnel were geared up in mid May anticipating this year's salt marsh mosquito season. Fortunately for most of the Naples area, the normal invasion of coastal areas by salt marsh mosquitoes has yet to occur.

While there are pockets of mosquitoes around Naples, they are not in the anticipated areas, and the actual mosquito numbers are much lower than expected for this time of year. In 2005 the CMCD made applications on 26 days by the end of June. This year there have only been six days of application, none of them on Marco Island, normally the hottest spot in the District.

What does the rest of the season look like? Ask us in December and we'll be able to tell you, but we won't try to predict what Mother Nature will throw at us for the rest of the year.

While mosquito numbers are low, we are seeing increasing numbers of the mosquito that can potentially transmit St. Louis Encephalitis and West Nile virus, so the CMCD expects that there will be more applications in the near future. Even with stepped-up control efforts, residents should begin taking normal precautions to protect themselves from mosquito bites.

Remember to follow the 5 D's to protect yourself from mosquitoes:

- Dusk and Dawn are the hours to avoid being outside since this is when the mosquito is most active.
- Dress appropriately in light colored long pants and long sleeve shirt if you must be outside.
- Apply a repellent containing DEET or, for more limited protection, Picaridin.
- Drain standing water in cans, tires, buckets and other water holding items.

### **Last chance to win**

Last month's article started a Collier Mosquito District contest to determine the best description of just how big and/or obnoxious the Naples' mosquitoes are. Entries are being accepted until July 30 so you still have time to try and win some nice mosquito control goodies. For more details on the contest, check last month's article on the Naples Daily News web site:  
[www.naplesnews.com/news/2006/jun/17/mosquito\\_control\\_just\\_how\\_big\\_bad\\_are\\_collier\\_mosq/](http://www.naplesnews.com/news/2006/jun/17/mosquito_control_just_how_big_bad_are_collier_mosq/)

Email your entry to me at [JStivers@CMCD.ORG](mailto:JStivers@CMCD.ORG) or fax it to 436-1005. Be sure to include the word "Contest" in the subject line on any emails so that your entry doesn't get deleted with the daily onslaught of spam.

- - -

*Jeffrey C. Stivers, Ph.D. is director of research for Collier Mosquito Control District. Contact him at [JStivers@collier-mosquito.org](mailto:JStivers@collier-mosquito.org) or by phone at 436-1000. The district Web site is [www.collier-moquito.org](http://www.collier-moquito.org).*