

Still no WNV-positive pools in Caledon

Peel Public Health's ongoing testing for West Nile Virus (WNV) is continuing, with still no major activity in Caledon. The Region has reported that as of Aug. 20, there had been 31 mosquito pools in Peel that had tested positive for the disease. Of that, 21 were in Brampton and 10 in Mississauga. During that week, there were eight new positive results in Brampton and four in Mississauga. There have been no Caledon pools that have tested positive this year.

There have been no human cases of the disease reported in Peel, although there has been one in neighbouring York Region (in Markham).

To date, there have been 94 WNV-positive mosquito batches found in Ontario. There was one other human case reported in Manitoba. South of the border, there have been 213 human cases of WNV in the United States; with 42 states reporting WNV activity.

Peel's adult mosquito surveillance program started in June. Adult mosquitoes are collected weekly from mosquito traps at 31 fixed locations throughout the region until late September.

To date, 464 mosquito batches have been tested for WNV.

The larviciding program continues. Larviciding involves applying environmentally friendly products to reduce mosquito larvae in stagnant water. Peel's larviciding program started in June and will continue until Sept. 30. It takes three weeks to complete a round of larviciding. There will be three rounds of roadside catch basin larviciding this year. The first round of roadside catch basin larviciding was completed July 15. Larviciding crews are currently starting the second round of catch basin treatments in Mississauga. The second round is indicated by a purple dot affixed to the catch basin grate.

Larviciding of catch basins in the green spaces of parks in Peel has been completed. The treatment of surface water sites on public lands is ongoing.

The Region is reminding residents they can reduce the risk of WNV by removing stagnant water on their property. Empty or dispose of containers that can hold water, such as old tires, wheelbarrows, barrels, pails, toys and recycling bins; turn over wading pools, remove water that collects on pool covers; and make sure swimming pool pumps are circulating.

People can also protect themselves from being bitten by mosquitoes by avoiding areas with large numbers of mosquitoes; wearing light-coloured clothing, including long sleeves, long pants, socks and a hat whenever outdoors (even in the backyard), especially at dusk and at dawn; and using an insect repellent and applying it according to the manufacturer's directions.

Symptoms of WNV may include fever, muscle weakness, stiff neck, confusion, severe headaches and a sudden sensitivity to light. In rare cases, the virus can cause serious neurological illness including encephalitis, or inflammation of the brain.