

Things still quiet on the West Nile Virus front in Peel

There are still no confirmed human cases of West Nile Virus (WNV) in Peel Region, as of the end of August.

Peel Public Health reported the last week of the month saw four mosquito pools in Brampton test positive for WNV and another two in Mississauga. That brings the total for the year to 10, with none in Caledon yet.

The adult mosquito surveillance program started in June, and will continue to from mosquito traps at 31 fixed locations throughout Peel until late September. There have been 700 mosquito batches tested, with the 10 positive results.

The larviciding program also started in June and will continue until Sept. 30. Larviciding involves applying environmentally friendly products to reduce mosquito larvae living in stagnant water. The products are applied to municipal catch basins and selected sites on public property.

The third and final round of roadside catch basin larviciding has been completed. The third round is indicated by a pink dot on the catch basin grate.

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

To date, there have been 30 WNV-positive mosquito batches in Ontario ? 10 in Peel, five in Toronto, four in Middlesex-London, three in Hamilton, two in Halton and York and one each in Haliburton-Kawartha-Pine Ridge, Niagara, Ottawa and Lambton.

There have been two reported WNV human cases ? one from a First Nations community within Simcoe/Muskoka and one from Windsor-Essex.

Across Canada, there have been 87 positive batches, including 19 in each of Quebec, Manitoba and Saskatchewan.

There are 297 human cases of WNV in the United States, including 93 in California, 43 in Louisiana and 30 in Texas.

The health department is reminding residents of the steps they can take to avoid exposure to the illness. They include removing stagnant by emptying or disposing of containers that can hold water, such as old tires, wheelbarrows, barrels, pails, toys and recycling bins; and turing over wading pools, removing water that collects on pool covers and making sure the pool's pump is circulating.

To protect themselves from being bitten by mosquitoes, people should wear light-coloured clothing, including long sleeves, long pants, socks and a hat whenever they are outdoors (even in the back yard), especially at dusk and at dawn; and use an insect repellent and apply it according to the manufacturer's directions.