

## MOSQUITO & TICK SURVEILLANCE PROGRAMS

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### MOSQUITO PROGRAM

In FY2018 The Dukes County Mosquito Control Program was administered by the County of Dukes County for the fifth consecutive year, with funding provided by the Boards of Health of the six towns on Martha's Vineyard. The total spending for FY2018 was \$5,626. The County provided the mosquito collecting equipment, a truck, office space and administrative support that made the Program possible. Mosquitoes were collected using gravid traps with hay water infusion as an attractant. We also sampled for mosquitoes that could potentially carry the Zika virus using cup traps and papers provided by Massachusetts Department of Public Health.

Every week from July 3 to September 26, 2017 samples were collected, sorted by species and shipped to the Massachusetts' Department of Public Health Laboratory in Jamaica Plain for testing. In order to be tested, a minimum of five mosquitoes of a relevant species had to be captured in an individual trap. We collected mosquitoes from one site in each Island town each week.

Only 311 mosquitoes were collected in 2017, the second lowest total in the five years of testing. In 2015 only 207 mosquitoes were collected, but in 2013, 2014 and 2016 I collected over 500 per year (see Table 1). Of the 311 mosquitoes collected, 92 were *Ochlerotatus japonicas* and 219 were the *Culex restuans/pipiens* complex. From these, 20 valid pools were collected and sent to the state lab for testing. None of these samples tested positive for West Nile Virus. No mosquitoes that could potentially carry the Zika virus were detected using the cup traps.

The number of mosquitoes in the *Culex restuans/pipiens* complex collected in 2017 was about half the numbers collected in 2013, 2014 and 2016, which accounts for the low number collected overall. The number of *Ochlerotatus japonicas* was slightly above the average for previous years.

### TICK PROGRAM

In May 2018, the County signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Boards of Health of all six Towns to operate the Tick surveillance program (formerly administered by the BOH). The goal of the program is to reduce the number of ticks and tick-borne illnesses. The County provides the following services to the Towns: financial management and financial reports, hires and supervises tick program staff and provides office and program space as needed. The BOH shall provide general programmatic oversight. The Steering Committee which consists of the County Manager and the Edgartown Health Agent and shall determine program activities, prepare annual operating budget, hire Tick Program Director and provide updates to the BOH. Funding for the program is ensured by the Boards of Health



through donations to the Permanent Endowment Fund. The Permanent Endowment Fund contributed **\$21,500 for the 2018 program season.**

**Tick yard surveys:** From mid-May through the end of July Tick Program staff will visit your yard, complete an assessment of potential tick habitat, check the yard for ticks and discuss ways you can reduce the number of ticks and the chance of being bitten. We request a minimum \$50.00 contribution for each survey, however we will do the survey for free if the contribution is an issue. If you would like to have a tick survey next spring, please complete a [Request for Tick Yard Survey](#)

**Hunting on Private Property:** We work with private landowners to connect them with responsible hunters to reduce deer populations Island-wide by targeting residential areas, a preferred habitat of our deer population. Find out more information and register here: <http://bit.ly/HuntingMVTicks>.

**Community Deer Cooler/Venison Donation Project:** We are working on an annual program with Island Grown Initiative (IGI) and the Martha's Vineyard Agricultural Society (MVAS) to increase the number of deer culled during bow and shotgun season on the Vineyard. The program includes a Community Deer Cooler that allows registered hunters to hang deer for up to 10 days (per deer) and IGI's Venison Donation Program that provides high-quality, protein-rich meals to Islanders in need. For more information, please visit here: <http://www.igimv.org/programs/food-equity-and-recovery/venison-donation-program>

**Public Presentations:** Tick Program staff do frequent public presentations throughout the year, focusing on ways to minimize the risk of tick-borne illnesses to you, your family and your pets. We also cover the latest research on ticks, including data on the location and frequency of our three common ticks collected during the yard surveys. If you would like to receive email notifications of our public presentation please contact Richard Johnson: [ticksmv@gmail.com](mailto:ticksmv@gmail.com)

**Private Small Group Presentation:** We also do presentation by request for Road and Homeowner Associations, civic groups and small groups of concerned individuals. These presentations are shorter and can be customized to meet the interests of the group. If you would like to request a small group presentation please contact Richard Johnson: [ticksmv@gmail.com](mailto:ticksmv@gmail.com)

**Media Coverage:** We are lucky to have two local newspapers and a local radio station that focus on issues important to our community. Dick Johnson is a frequent guest on WMVY's Vineyard Current, Laurel Reddington's Sunday morning .... Show. Both the Vineyard Gazette and the MV Times have publish frequent news stories on ticks and tick-related issues. Dick Johnson has also published several articles on the Gazette OpEd page, including Why We Should Focus on Reducing Deer and not Mice, Methods and Costs of Reducing Ticks and Deer (rename) and Lone Star Tick Larvae.



