



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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County Strikes Early Against Spring Mosquitoes ***Winter Aerial Larvicide Application at San Elijo Lagoon Will Protect Residents in Spring***

San Diego County Vector Control will apply a mosquito larvicide tomorrow morning at San Elijo Lagoon in order to protect nearby residents from spring mosquitoes.

A helicopter will be used to apply the larvicide, which will target a mosquito known as *Ochlerotatus squamiger*. This type of mosquito is not known to transmit West Nile virus.

"While our coastal lagoons are sources of great beauty, they can also be the sources of pests, such as mosquitoes," said Chairwoman Slater-Price. "I am pleased to report to residents living close to the lagoons that the County is doing everything we need to do to stop the threat of mosquitoes."

The *Ochlerotatus squamiger* mosquito is common in coastal areas. The mosquitoes lay their eggs on vegetation in the brackish areas of lagoons. The larvae then spend the winter months slowly maturing until the weather warms up enough to complete their development into biting adults. There can be large numbers of adults in the early spring causing significant discomfort to those who live near the areas where they breed.

Because this species of mosquito has only one generation per year and spends so much time in the larval stage, the County has an opportunity to affect control with a single, well-timed application of larvicide. The larvicide is a granular formulation containing *Bacillus thuringiensis*, a naturally occurring bacterium that does not pose a risk to the environment. The early rains this year should have caused most of the eggs to hatch by now. Recent samplings in other mosquito-breeding areas revealed large numbers of very young larvae. A single application of larvicide now should provide effective control of this species for the entire season.

Many of the mosquitoes breeding areas are accessible by foot or boat, making treatment possible by our technicians. However, the area around San Elijo Lagoon is not accessible by ground crews, so it must be treated by aerial methods.

To report dead birds or mosquito-breeding areas, please call the County of San Diego Vector Control at 888-551-INFO. You can protect yourself from mosquitoes by wearing long sleeves and pants when outdoors, and by using an insect repellent containing DEET when you must be outdoors. Eliminate standing water around your home, keep screens on doors and windows, and make sure they are in good repair. For more information about the West Nile virus, call the County's West Nile virus information line at 1-888-551-INFO (4636) or visit the official County West Nile virus website at www.SDFightTheBite.com.

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