



News Release

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June 7, 2021

Help reduce mosquito bites

You can be a mosquito bite fighter along with the Regional District Mosquito Control program.

While precipitation is lower than normal for this time of year, nuisance mosquitoes are still present. As mosquitoes usually peak between mid-June and the end of July, steps you take now around your property can help make for fewer bites this summer.

Help reduce mosquito development and hatches by:

- Remove any standing water sources and unused items that collect water such as old tires, plant pots or garbage cans - just a few millimetres of water is all that's needed for mosquito larva to survive and hatch
- Cover rain barrels with a screen so that mosquitoes can't lay their eggs in the water
- At least twice a week change the water in birdbaths, wading pools and pet bowls
- Remove any water that sits in unused swimming pools and on swimming pool covers
- Aerate water in ponds or add fish that will feed on mosquito larvae

The RDCO Mosquito Control program says residents can also protect themselves in a number of ways:

- Use approved repellents
- Wear loose fitting, light coloured clothing
- Minimize activities near treed and bushy areas at dawn and dusk when adult mosquitos are most active
- Repair and replace any window screens to help prevent mosquitoes entering your home

For several years, trained professionals from Duka Environmental Limited have been providing mosquito control to the RDCO to those areas that help fund the program.

President Curtis Fediuk says, "The program's designed to control, not eliminate mosquitoes. Following COVID safety measures, we've been out in the field since mid-April monitoring 280 known mosquito breeding locations. When we find mosquito larvae developing, we apply a bacterial larvicide that controls the larva before they become biting adults."

During July and August, the program also controls mosquito development by monitoring and if necessary treating more than 12,000 roadside catch basins located along public roadways and residential streets.

Residents in the participating areas of the program (City of Kelowna, District of Lake Country, District of Peachland, Central Okanagan East, Westbank First Nation and a small section of West Kelowna Estates in the City of West Kelowna) can report mosquito concerns by completing an online form at rdco.com/mosquitoes or calling Duka Environmental at 1-800-681-3472.

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Regional District of Central Okanagan Mosquito Control Program

Measures	2020	2019	2018 **	2017 **
Known Surface Water Larval Development Sites	280	230	230	230
# of Application Sites	209	190	231	175
Amount of bio-rational larvicide applied (kg)	977	1,248	1,180	1,240
Hectares treated	130.32	166	157	165

** Higher than average high water years

The mandate of the program is to provide effective and efficient nuisance mosquito control through the reduction and management of mosquito larvae in an environmentally friendly manner. This contributes positively to the quality of life and minimizes the risk of West Nile Virus to residents in the Central Okanagan.

Program Questions and Answers

When does it run?

From March/April through September each year known development locations in participating areas throughout the Regional District (Lake Country, Kelowna, Peachland, Central Okanagan East Electoral Area, West Kelowna Estates in West Kelowna) are inspected for signs of mosquito larvae. There needs to be standing water for at least seven days for mosquitoes to thrive. If larvae are found, bio-rational larvicide pellets containing a heat killed bacterium is applied to the water surface, which kills the larvae within hours. Problem areas are visited regularly to ensure there are no new hatches.

What is the pellet used in the larvicide program?

The larvicide acronym is *Bti* for *Bacillus thuringiensis var israelensis*, a bacterial extract that is ingested by the larval stage of the mosquito. The extract contains a protein that when ingested, ruptures the gut of the mosquito larvae. The product lasts approximately 96 hours and is non-toxic.

How many sites are monitored?

There are approximately 280 known mosquito larval development sites being monitored within the participating areas. Also 12,000 roadside catch basins are monitored and treated as needed in participating jurisdictions of Kelowna, Lake Country, Peachland and the Central Okanagan East Electoral Area.

Who licenses the program?

The Regional District of Central Okanagan has a Pest Management Plan and Confirmation Number from the BC Ministry of Environment which permits the RDCO to conduct mosquito surveillance and control program. The RDCO keeps a record of the location, number of applications and the volume of *Bti* used.

How do I report possible mosquito breeding sites?

Residents can report concerns with mosquitoes by calling 1-800-681-3472 or completing an online form at rdco.com/mosquitoes.

Why is this type of nuisance control program used?

This program is sensitive to the need to protect our environment and has proven effective in controlling the nuisance mosquito population throughout the Central Okanagan while also reducing the potential risk of the West Nile Virus.