Department of Public Health
CITY OF PHILADELPHIA

Philadelphia Department of Public Health

Division of Disease Control

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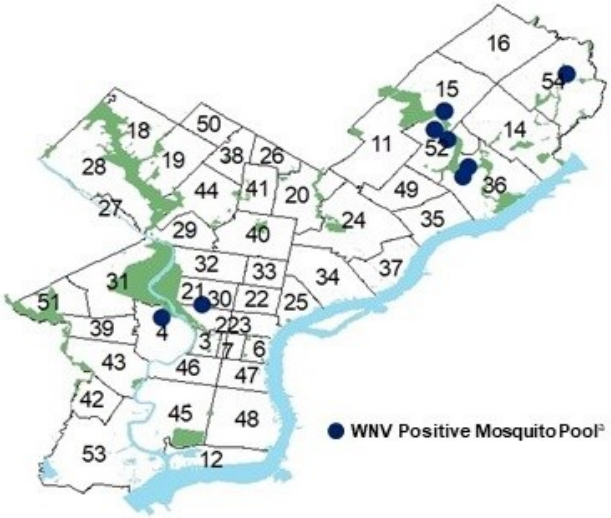
2020 Philadelphia West Nile Virus Activity Report
August 13, 2020

On July 8th, the first mosquito pool infected with West Nile virus (WNV) in Philadelphia for the 2020 season was collected near Penny Pack Park. Positive mosquito pools also have been identified in neighboring counties in Pennsylvania. No human cases have been reported in the City. While the number of human cases of WNV and location of outbreaks has varied by season across the country, identification of mosquitoes infected with WNV remains the best predictor of increased risk for human infection in a given location. The WNV mosquito pool positivity in 2020 is lower than the historic median rate (3.2% vs. 5.4%), and lower than rates observed in 2012 and 2018 (24-39%), peak WNV activity seasons in Philadelphia.

From May through October, the Philadelphia Department of Public Health (PDPH) in collaboration with the PA Department of Environmental Protection conducts mosquito management activities throughout Philadelphia, which entails surveillance and identification of mosquito pools, testing pools for WNV, and control activities (eliminating breeding sites, larviciding catch basins, ground spraying, etc.). Since May 2020, 3 locations in Philadelphia have been treated to control adult mosquito populations.

West Nile Virus Mosquito and Human Case Surveillance, Philadelphia PA, Morbidity Week 31 and Cumulative 2020 Season Update



[a]3 locations had 2-3 mosquito pools test positive.

	Week 31 (7/26–8/1)	2020 Season (5/1–8/1)
Mosquito Pools Tested[a]	45	398
WNV Positive Pools	6	13
Humans Tested[b]	0	0
Human WNV Cases	0	0

[a]398 mosquito pools at 87 different mosquito trapping sites
[b]Testing among case reports received by PDPH only

State and National WNV Activity Reports

- Pennsylvania Department of Health
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

WNV Testing and Reporting Requirements for Human Surveillance in Philadelphia:

- Collect CSF (from symptom onset–day 8) and serum (day 8–14) from patients with unexplained encephalitis or meningitis for WNV IgM testing.
- Report suspected and confirmed WNV infections (neuroinvasive or non-neuroinvasive illness) and encephalitis cases to PDPH by telephone at 215-685-6742 (or 215-686-4514 after hours). Reports also may be faxed to 215-238-6947.

Advise your patients to:

- Use repellent with DEET (≥20% to also prevent tick bites), Picaridin, or oil of lemon eucalyptus when outdoors.
- Regularly check and remove standing water outside their home (e.g., unused pools, tires).
- Keep well-fitted screens on windows and doors.
- Report mosquito problems and dead bird sightings to the PDPH Vector Control Program's Mosquito Complaint hotline at 215-685-9000.