

**County of Ventura  
Environmental Health Division**

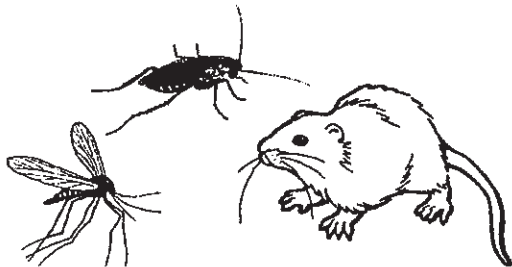
# **Vector Control Program**



## **VECTOR CONTROL PROGRAM**

The Ventura County Vector Control Program (VCP) is a part of the Environmental Health Division. Program staff maintain constant monitoring and control activities to prevent and minimize the exposure of the public to vectorborne disease. A vector is any insect, arthropod, or other animal of public health significance capable of harboring or transmitting the causative agent of human disease.

Vector Program staff activities include: countywide mosquito abatement; countywide monitoring of mosquitoes for West Nile virus, encephalitis virus and malaria; monitoring of the wild rodent population for the potential of plague and hantavirus transmission; the study of the tick population for tick species distribution and the potential for Lyme disease transmission; and response to citizen questions and complaints with advice and consultation on vector related problems. Following in this pamphlet is a brief description of these activities.



### **Mosquitoes**

Mosquito bites are an obvious public nuisance, but mosquitoes are also responsible for the spread of many diseases worldwide. Mosquito borne diseases of importance in Ventura County are viral encephalitis and malaria. The VCP staff conducts a West Nile virus and encephalitis virus disease surveillance program throughout the County. Adult mosquitoes are collected and submitted for laboratory analysis to determine if they are carrying these diseases. Sentinel chicken flocks are also used to monitor the presence of West Nile virus and encephalitis in the mosquito population. In cooperation with the Californian Department of Public Health, dead birds are collected and submitted for laboratory analysis to test for the presence of West Nile virus in the wild bird population.

Mosquito control is accomplished through the application of specific pesticides to known mosquito breeding sources when mosquito larvae are found. These sites include flood control channels, drains, ditches, gutters, creeks and pools. Mosquito fish are provided at no charge to the public, to stock ornamental ponds, pools, and other similar areas where mosquitoes might be breeding. The mosquito control program depends on public participation to eliminate backyard mosquito breeding sources and to inform the vector control program staff of any mosquito problems occurring in an area.

### **Plague and Hantavirus**

Rangers and other park personnel are trained to watch for sick or dead rodents, or other evidence that plague or hantavirus may be active in an area, and to report their observations to VCP staff.

Preventative measures will be initiated when plague is found in areas where human exposure is possible. Warning signs will be posted and the area may be quarantined. Insecticides may be used to reduce the possibility of plague transmission by fleas.

### **Domestic Rodents**

VCP staff will provide advice and consultation to the public on what they can do to prevent or control a rodent problem.

### **Education**

VCP staff provide advice and consultation on a wide variety of potential vector, animal, and insect problems, from bees to stored food pests. The main emphasis is to provide information to the public on steps and actions individuals can take to remedy or prevent the problem.

VCP staff are also available for lectures pertaining to vector problems. Public agencies and private organizations can contact EHD and arrange for staff to talk at meetings and schools.

## **Vector Control Program Contact Information:**

- ▶ To request free mosquito fish:  
805/662-6582
  
- ▶ To report mosquito complaints:  
805/658-4310
  
- ▶ To report dead wild birds: (toll free)  
877/968-2473
  
- ▶ To request a speaker:  
805/654-2816
  
- ▶ Fax:  
805/654-2674
  
- ▶ Website:  
[www.ventura.org/rma/envhealth](http://www.ventura.org/rma/envhealth)