



For Immediate Release

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Hurricanes and Tropical Deluges Boost Threat From the 'World's Deadliest Animal'

~June 16 – 22 is National Mosquito Control Awareness Week; Fight the Bite~

Tallahassee, FL – Floridians and tourists flock outdoors in the Sunshine State during the summer months and may not realize that the world's deadliest animal is an ever-present uninvited guest.

Mosquitoes, stealthy and virtually invisible, are enjoying the weather and thriving in every outdoor setting. And they bring a serious health risk with them, potentially carrying diseases like Dengue fever, Zika, malaria, West Nile virus and Equine Encephalitis.

This week the [Florida Mosquito Control Association](#) (FMCA) and its members - 67 mosquito control programs including 15 independent districts - are reminding the public to take precautions to protect themselves from mosquito bites and the diseases they transmit.

"The world's top mosquito control scientists and experts are in Florida, working 24/7 to control and mitigate the threat of disease," said Richard Weaver, President of the Florida Mosquito Control Association and Business Manager at the Anastasia Mosquito Control District in St. Johns County "Floridians know and understand the need to be vigilant about hurricanes and tropical storms, however we must also be vigilant about mosquitoes."

That vigilance is heightened in Florida where the warm and wondrous tropical weather draws millions of visitors and thousands of new residents each year.

Mosquitoes are drawn to our state for the same reasons. And this year is threatening to open the door for even more of these dangerous animals. Just this month, [heavy rain and life-threatening floods drenched South Florida](#), leaving standing water throughout the region and providing the perfect habitat for mosquitoes to breed. And mosquitoes also enjoy the aftermath of hurricanes which creates immeasurable opportunities for mosquito breeding.

So far three counties have already issued [mosquito-borne illness advisories or alerts](#) for local transmission of Dengue virus and Eastern Equine Encephalitis virus.

And because weather experts are predicting there is [an 85 percent chance of an above-average hurricane season](#) with up to 25 named storms – mosquito control experts are already on high-alert.

“Preparing for mosquitoes is similar to what Floridians do each hurricane season,” said Dr. Jorge Rey, FMCA Vice President and professor at the [University of Florida’s Medical Entomology Laboratory](#). “Smart, precautionary measures can help reduce mosquitoes around your home and mitigate public health risks.”

The American Mosquito Control Association has [a summary of those small measures](#), calling them the three D’s of protection.

- > Drain – Following a rain or storm, each household and property becomes a resort for mosquitoes looking for a place to lay her eggs. Mosquitoes only need a teaspoon of water to develop, so emptying even small accumulations of water outside can make a difference.
- > Dress – Wear long sleeves and long pants that are light-colored and loose-fitting. These clothing choices are a deterrent to mosquitoes.
- > Defend – [Mosquito repellents](#) containing DEET, Picaridin and IR3535 are powerful shields against mosquitoes. If a more natural product is preferred, repellents containing Oil of Lemon Eucalyptus are great options.

Floridians are fortunate to have world-class scientists and professionals working to control mosquitoes and the diseases they spread. These scientists partner with each other and local health departments to share important news, resources, and scientific studies. They also stand ready to respond to any Floridian’s request for local mosquito treatment.

“Success is never final in controlling the countless mosquitoes in our state,” said Weaver. “But Florida remains exceedingly safe and accessible to residents, businesses and visitors. Our state’s economic and physical health depend on our incredible team of mosquito control scientists and highly trained professionals.”

For more information about the FMCA please [click here](#). And for teachers and parents, [the FMCA has resources to inform children](#) about the science and background of mosquitoes and efforts to control them here.

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