



2008

# OWENS VALLEY MOSQUITO ABATEMENT PROGRAM ANNUAL REPORT



***Jerrold Oser***  
*Manager, Owens Valley Mosquito  
Abatement Program  
Administered by: Inyo County  
Agriculture Department  
207 West South St.  
Bishop, CA 93514*



*Handful of mosquito larvae*



*Spring flooding of the LORP*

*The OVMAP provides year-round mosquito control to 1700 square miles of the Owens Valley. As a comparison, the entire state of Rhode Island is 1045 square miles. All that coverage area is divided into 5 geographical zones, with technicians responsible for all aspects of mosquito control in their assigned zone, from surveillance to eventual treatment.*

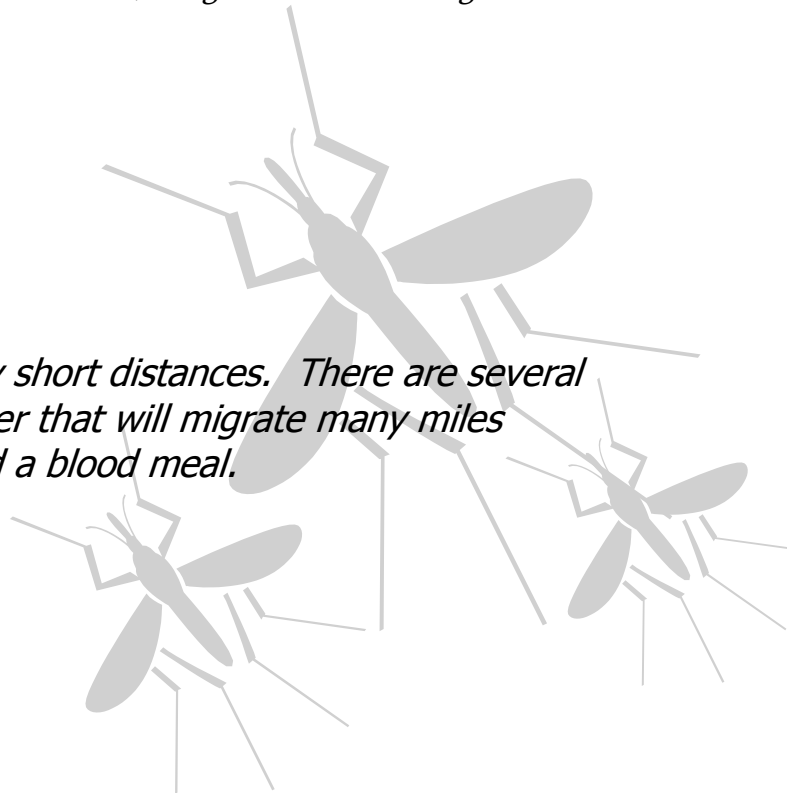
*The mission of the OVMAP is “To enhance public health and comfort through providing safe, effective and economical mosquito control in the Owens Valley”.*

*To accomplish this, the OVMAP provides continual surveillance of mosquitoes to ascertain the threat of disease transmission and annoyance levels, then uses safe, integrated vector management methods to keep mosquitoes below those levels.*

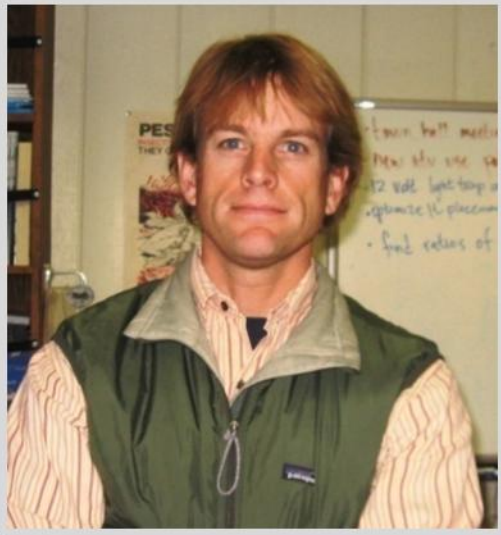
## **Mosquito Fact**

### **How Far do Mosquitoes Fly?**

*Most species of mosquitoes only fly short distances. There are several species in the Owens Valley however that will migrate many miles (especially in a strong wind) to find a blood meal.*



# FORWARD



I am pleased to present the 2008 Annual Report for the Owens Valley Mosquito Abatement Program. The Program continues on its mission to enhance public health and comfort through providing safe, effective and economical mosquito control in the Owens Valley made possible through area wide, responsive service. The following report outlines the work performed by the Program to achieve these mission objectives.

West Nile virus (WNV) reared its head again in 2008 on a State level.

To date, there have been more human cases, horse cases, dead birds, mosquito pools, and sentinel chickens than were reported in 2007. In Inyo County, we remained WNV negative for the first year since 2004. I'd like to think we

remained WNV negative for 2008 because we have such a marvelous staff (certainly a large part of it) but the actual reasons beyond that will remain speculative.

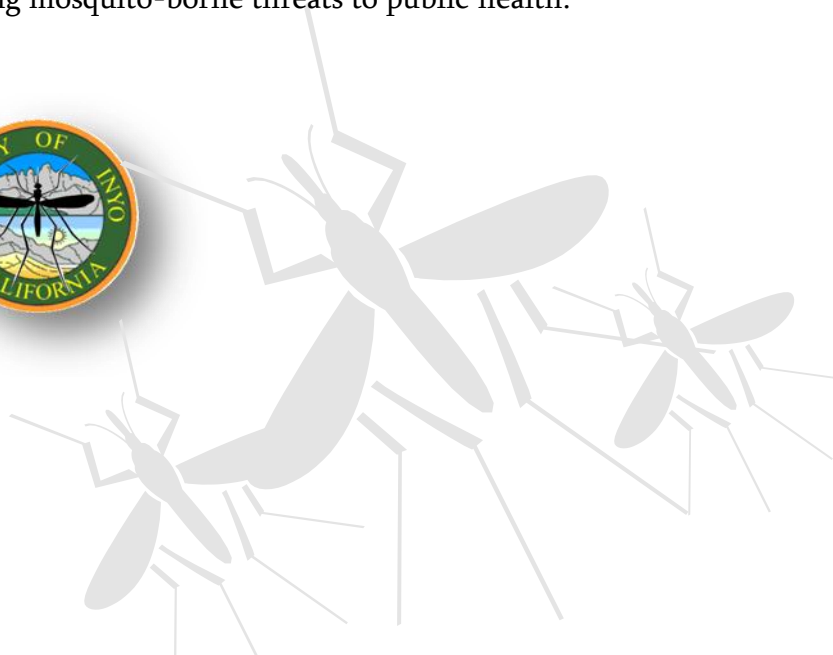
We did have an exceptional staff for the season with 1 more seasonal technician than last year. These guys put in dozens of hours of overtime while larvaciding, adultciding, setting mosquito traps, and doing public outreach. In the office, we also welcomed the addition of Jennifer Sarten who is fast becoming a valuable part of the indispensable administrative team.

The Program continues to better its delivery of control services to succeed in its mission to protect public health. We strive, to the best of our ability, to keep up-to-date technologically, both chemically and informationally, and to be innovative in controlling mosquito-borne threats to public health.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jerrold Oser".

Jerrold Oser, Program Manager



# FULL TIME FIELD STAFF



**Robert Miller** *“Hello, I am a certified mosquito control technician employed by the Program since December of 2001. I’ve lived here in the Owens Valley for over 34 years and am committed to serving the people of this county in protecting the public health and comfort level in the reduction of mosquito populations.*

*My job duties are to conduct the full range of operational activities for the detection, control and prevention of disease causing and pestiferous mosquitoes. I am also responsible in overseeing the maintenance, repair and fabrication of our vehicles and equipment.”*



**Casey Freeman** *“Born and raised in Bishop, I have been on many outings interrupted by mosquitoes. This can be very frustrating. As a resident I would like to limit the altercations with these pestiferous creatures to zero. As a Mosquito Control Technician since May 2005, I understand that zero might not be achievable, but getting as close to that and reducing the exposures to disease is of the utmost importance. During summer months, doing just that is my main concern with the offseason consisting of office computer work, mapping, and multiple projects aimed at making summer months easier for all.”*

## **Seasonal Staff**

As mentioned above, we had a total of 6 field staff this season, 1 more than usual. With the extra help we were able to gain great control on our pasture sources as well as the lower Owens River area, which still holds a few secrets as to where mosquitoes are breeding along its length.

Those seasonal technicians were Bruce (Bo) Mack, who has been with us since 2003 and works full time with the county but seasonally split with us and the water department for their salt cedar program in the winter months. David Miller, who finished his 2<sup>nd</sup> season, also works with the salt cedar program in the winter. Our newest technician, Michael Harrison, did a great job and is vowing to come back next season.

The ability to offer winter seasonal opportunities to these first-rate employees and have them return year after year is a great asset to the program and the public it serves. Every effort should be made to continue these opportunities in the future.

# ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT



**Robin Conklin**  
Executive Secretary

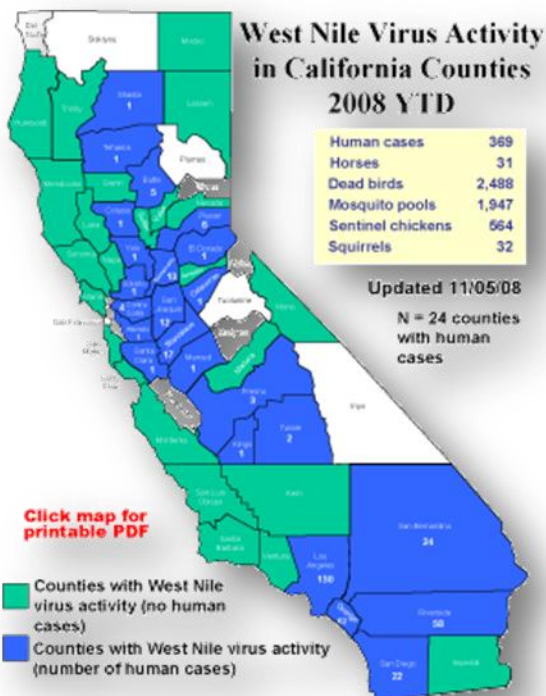


**George Milovich**  
Agriculture Commissioner



**Jennifer Sarten**  
Acct. Technician

# WEST NILE VIRUS ACTIVITY



West Nile virus activity on the State level was quite a bit more intense than 2007, with many more positive dead birds and mosquito samples. Inyo County was one of the few counties that stayed negative for 2008. 33 dead birds were reported to the State and 7 were collected and submitted for testing by the Inyo County Environmental Health Department, however, none came back positive. In contrast, 2007 saw 47 reported, 13 submitted and 1 positive for the Owens Valley area. One reason for this might be waning public interest in the dead bird program.

An effort will be made next season to relay the importance of this program in the early detection of the virus.

The entire Eastside region did not escape the virus as 2 positive dead birds were found in late September from the Town of Mammoth Lakes. Even Mammoth, with its relatively short mosquito season, is not immune from risk to West Nile virus.

Learn more about the Owens Valley Mosquito Abatement Program and West Nile Virus by visiting our website:

[www.inyomonoagriculture.com](http://www.inyomonoagriculture.com)

## ***The Lower Owens River***

This season began with a bang as the lower Owens River experienced its first spring flow to simulate the natural flooding during a typical spring runoff. We were lucky from a mosquito standpoint that the timing was early enough as not to raise many mosquitoes. The photos to the right show a before and after sequence taken in February of 2008. If floodwater mosquitoes establish their eggs in the fresh mud left behind as waters recede, then future floods especially if they happen later in the year, will make any outdoor activity seem like a visit to the blood bank. Early season mosquitoes will be much worse.



*“If floodwater mosquitoes establish their eggs in the fresh mud left behind as waters recede, then future floods, especially if they happen later in the year, will make any outdoor activity seem like a visit to the blood bank.”*

## ***The Upper Owens River***

We were hit with some harsh conditions when the Owens was raised earlier than usual to fill a southern reservoir after some repair work was completed. When the river is raised above 400 cubic feet per second, some interesting things begin to happen with regards to mosquito production. The river bank breaches in many areas filling old river channels that hold nothing but dry tules and mosquito eggs, both eager for a drink. Some species of floodwater mosquitoes can lay eggs in fresh mud that can then lay dormant and dry for years between flooding. As the mosquito larvae hatch and grow, OVMAP technicians begin to treat the sources with various larvaciding materials, in hopes of putting a dent in the blood thirsty

freight train we know is coming.

The first adult mosquitoes began to hatch by late May and the migration from the river to nearby towns was well underway by June 1. Calls started coming in from Bishop to Lone Pine and everywhere in between.

Folks were just getting eaten alive on the short walk to their mailbox.

Fogging operations began in earnest but were hampered by weather conditions that were less than optimal so it took longer than expected to finally get a handle on the situation.

Once we gained control in mid June things became more routine and instead of getting angry service calls we were getting much appreciated letters of gratitude.

### **Oak Creek Mudslide**

The mudslide that took out Highway 395 and redirected Oak Creek, causing large mosquito sources north of Fort Independence, was something out of the ordinary to say the least. We took it in stride and took care of the issue with the entire field staff working together in multiple trips to treat the area.

In total, OVMAP applied 517 pounds of biological larvaecide and 150 ounces of adulticide to keep mosquito populations stemming from this event, in check.



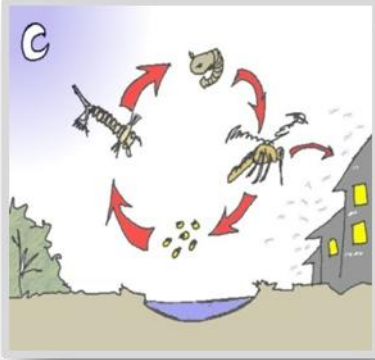
*Photo: KSRW*

## **Mosquito Fact**

### ***How Long Can Mosquito Eggs Last?***

*Many species of mosquitoes need to lay their eggs on standing water which hatch into larvae in a few days. Some floodwater species, however, lay their eggs in fresh mud which can then dry and remain viable for several years until another flood cycle.*

# COMMUNITY OUTREACH



*Hand drawn mosquito life cycle  
from new handout/flier.*

This year was the second year that OVMAP brought a booth to the Tri-County Fair in an effort to educate the public in what we do.

We had the great opportunity to have our display in the Charles Brown Auditorium, complete with some tools of the trade, West Nile virus information, a mosquito fish tank, and loads of live larvae that kids and adults enjoyed feeding to the fish.

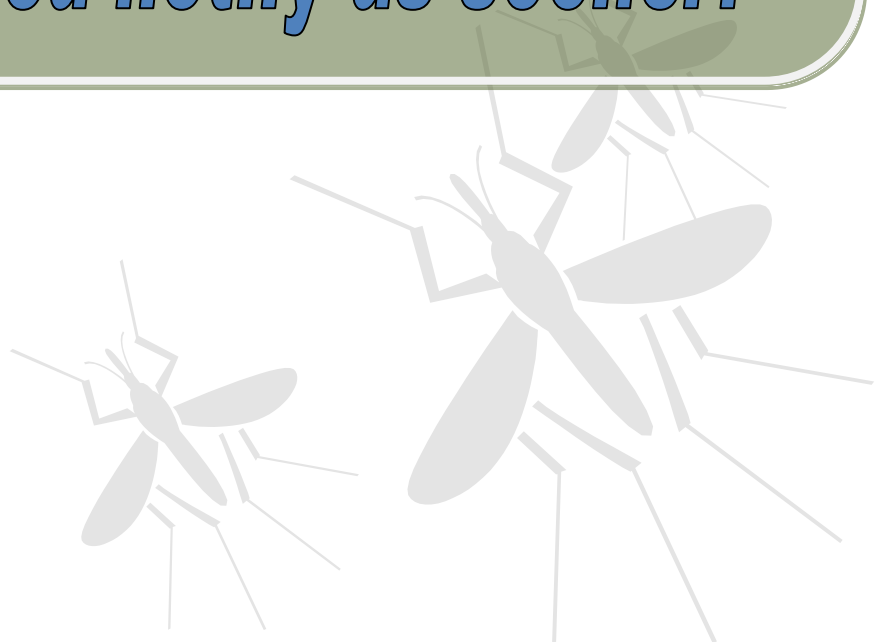
We also created a new informational handout/flier, made several radio announcements, and provided articles to the Inyo Register.

Future plans include specific outreach for the residents of Cartago and Olancho.

**Q: Why can't you notify residents sooner when you fog or spray for adult mosquitoes?**

**A:** *When we receive information on mosquito hatches or trapped mosquitoes return positive from testing for West Nile, we have to act quickly to reduce the risk to public health. If we wait, conditions could become worse.*

**Why can't you notify us sooner?**



# FINANCIALS

## REVENUES

**06/07**

**07/08**

Benefit Assessments  
Contracts/Grants  
Interest

\$374,445  
\$ 92,764  
\$ 5,649

\$328,918  
\$ 86,972  
\$ 4,842

**Total Revenues**

**\$472,858**

**\$420,732**

## EXPENDITURES

Salaries & Wages  
Services & Supplies  
Capital

\$234,139  
\$244,892  
\$ 27,425

\$249,000  
\$208,231  
\$ 0

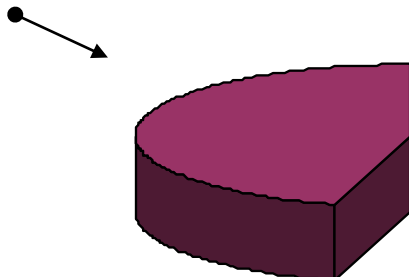
**Total Expenditures**

**\$506,456**

**\$457,832**

### 2007-08 Expenditures

**Services & Supplies**



**Salaries & Wages**

