FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: September 26, 2019

Mark A.R. Cooper, Director of Health for the Westport Weston Health District emphasized today that the EEE and West Nile virus have not been found in mosquitos in Westport or Weston so far this season, but that it may only be a matter of time; West Nile virus is usually identified in local mosquitos later each fall. The mosquitos that carry the virus are active until the first heavy frost.

The State Department of Health has recently advised residents who live in towns or near towns where EEE virus has been found in mosquitos and/or where there has been a confirmed case of EEE involving a human, horse or commercial exotic bird are advised to protect themselves and their children by: (1) taking personal precautions to prevent mosquito bites and (2) minimizing outdoor activity from dusk to dawn, when mosquitos are most active. If outdoor activity is unavoidable, all personal precautions to prevent mosquito bites should be taken.

The EEE virus has been identified in mosquitos in 12 towns that include: Chester, Haddam, Hampton, Groton, Killingworth, Ledyard, Madison, North Stonington, Plainfield, Shelton, Stonington, and Voluntown. Horses have tested positive for EEE virus in Colchester and Columbia this season, and the virus has been detected in a flock of wild pheasants. Other states throughout the Northeast are also experiencing an active season for EEE. In addition to the virus being found in mosquitos, human cases of EEE infection, including fatalities, have been identified this year in Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and New Jersey. There have now been two human deaths from EEE in Connecticut so far this year.

Dr. Theodore Andreasis, Director of Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station (CAES), said, “Right now, we are seeing that the greatest risk is east of the Connecticut River. However, the very good news is that as we monitor our mosquitos population, we are seeing a significant overall decline in the number of mosquitos collected in our statewide trapping as well as the number of mosquitos infected with the EEE virus.”

The Health District recommends residents reduce mosquito breeding places by:
- Eliminate any objects outside that can hold water.
- Clean house gutters that may be retaining water.
- Empty wading pools and bird baths every few days.
- Chlorinate swimming pools regularly.
- Make sure the covers that are on grills, boats, pools, and other equipment do not collect water.
- Ensure door and window screens are tight fitting and in good repair to avoid mosquito bites when indoors.

The following are measures that can help reduce bites from mosquitos that feed on people:
- Be particularly careful at dusk and dawn when mosquitos are most active.
- Wear shoes, socks, long pants, and long-sleeved shirts. Clothing material should be tightly woven.
- Use mosquito netting when sleeping outdoors.
- Consider the use of CDC-recommended mosquito repellents, containing DEET, picaridin, oil of lemon eucalyptus, IR3535, or 2-undecanone, and apply according to directions, when it is necessary to be outdoors.
- When using DEET, use the lowest concentration effective for the time spent outdoors (for example, 6 percent lasts approximately two hours and 20 percent for four hours) and wash treated skin when returning indoors. Do not apply under clothing, to wounds or irritated skin, the hands of children, or to infants less than two months old.

For more information on West Nile Virus, visit the Health District’s Web site at www.wwhd.org and/or the Connecticut Mosquito Management Program Web site at www.ct.gov/mosquito.