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As mosquito season begins, Putnam County Mosquito Control officials said they have seen a lot of activity in the south end of the county.

“Any low-lying areas (are) active all year round,” said Lynn Wasdin, sanitation manager and Mosquito Control manager for the county.

She said areas such as East Palatka and Georgetown see a lot of mosquito activity. The number of mosquitoes get worse during hurricane season because of all the rain.

Mosquito traps have already been placed around the county to monitor activity and sentinel chickens will be placed around the county to monitor viruses such as West Nile virus and eastern equine encephalitis.

“We test the chickens. We draw blood, send the samples to the lab,” pesticide technician Wynonah Little said. “They check for everything.”

She said four chickens will be placed at six sites around the county. Although no reports of West Nile Virus are near Putnam County, four reports of the virus came from Miami this month, according to the Florida Department of Health.

In a partnership with Clarke Environmental Mosquito Control, public areas in the county with a large population of mosquitoes are usually sprayed every week. The traps placed around the county require at least 25 mosquitoes to be found and Wasdin said that isn't hard to find.

Clarke does not spray in private residences or along private roads through Putnam County Mosquito Control, but residents can call the company at 329-1279 for a private quotation.

To prevent large mosquito swarms in a home, Mosquito Control employees advised replacing water in bird baths frequently, keeping lawns mowed, making sure no water is left standing and keeping screens repaired and windows closed.

Wasdin recommended staying inside at night if possible or covering up with long-sleeved shirts and pants. Insect repellent approved by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency will combat mosquitoes, but the repellent is not to be used on babies younger than 2 months.

People who wish to spray their lawn with mosquito repellent should do so in the evening because it is when mosquitoes are most active.

For residents with ponds or other bodies of water near their house, Solid Waste Director Jay Tilton said gambusia fish could help control the mosquito population. The fish are available on Amazon and Little said she has a few at Mosquito Control.

“Those little fish eat the mosquito larvae,” Tilton said.

Residents who have questions regarding Mosquito Control can call 329-0397.

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