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MEDIA RELEASE



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For immediate release

'Fight the Bite' as mosquito numbers start to rise

Heavy rainfall accompanying Tropical Cyclones Hilda and Joyce has provided ideal conditions for mosquitoes to breed and the community is being urged to help control them.

Shire of Broome Environmental Health Officers are monitoring mosquito numbers and applying larvicide to breeding areas as part of a mosquito management strategy. Conditions will also be monitored closely to determine whether chemical fogging is required in the future.

Shire of Broome Manager Health, Emergency and Rangers, Ty Matson, said the community also had a vital part to play in stopping mosquitoes breeding by removing any pooling water from their properties.

"Environmental Health Officers have been working to minimise mosquitoes, including monitoring areas of standing water to find out where they are breeding and then applying larvicide to prevent them growing to adulthood," Mr Matson said.

"Trapping adult mosquitoes also allows us to monitor the identity and density of the population, and the Shire also maintains a sentinel chicken program with the WA Department of Health to detect the presence of mosquito-borne viruses.

"We also strongly encourage the community to take measures to prevent mosquitoes breeding in the environment, and to prevent themselves being bitten."

Measures to protect the community by stopping mosquitoes from breeding include:

- Emptying any standing water from containers, old tyres and drums;
- Keeping ornamental ponds stocked with mosquito-eating fish;
- Keeping swimming pools well chlorinated and filtered, as well as free from leaves;
- Filling or draining depressions in the ground that hold water;
- Screening rainwater tanks with insect-proof mesh;
- Ensuring guttering does not hold water;
- Emptying pot plant drip trays once a week or filling with sand.

Basic precautions to prevent being bitten by mosquitoes include:

- Reducing outdoor activities during high mosquito activity periods (dawn and dusk);
- Covering up by wearing light-coloured, long-sleeved shirts and long pants that are loose fitting;
- Applying personal insect repellent containing DEET or Picaridin if possible;
- Ensuring fly screen doors and windows are fitted and maintained.

More information is available online at www.broome.wa.gov.au or by contacting Shire of Broome Environmental Health Services on (08) 9191 3456 or shire@broome.wa.gov.au.

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