

# Bloodsuckers!



THOMAS LEE/CHRONICLE  
Mosquitoes utilize a piercing proboscis to extract blood meals from birds, horses and humans.

## Mosquitoes, West Nile virus growing concerns as summer months wane

By **BEN PIERCE**  
Chronicle OutThere Editor

Without fail, the onset of the summer months is accompanied by Montana's favorite pest — the mosquito. Whether buzzing in the ears around the campfire or exploding in a pool of blood following a swift swat, mosquitoes are as much a part of summer as swimming, just not quite as enjoyable.

"We have such a tremendous number that it would be hard to say if there are more this year than others," said Patricia Denke, pest management section supervisor for the Montana Department of Agriculture. "It is

hard to make a distinction between more than you can count and more than you can count."

In any case, the persistent buzzing and painful welts have citizens reaching for the insect repellent just as Montana's mosquito onslaught is reaching a critical period. The coming weeks will be important in regard to West Nile virus which was first discovered in Montana in 2002. Last year saw 202 cases of West Nile reported in Montana, resulting in five deaths.

Denke said that while mosquito numbers may be average this year, the wet weather of spring and early summer combined with sudden hot temperatures likely delayed the development of millions of mosquitoes resulting in a more abrupt hatch.

"Mosquito larvae are aquatic and the bugs won't hatch until the oxygen content in the water decreases," Denke said. "Once the flood pools drop, the bugs hatch."

While those bugs are now dying off, a different breed of mosquito is now taking to the air.

"Water we saw in spring and summer certainly helped along the nuisance mosquitoes that do not carry West Nile," said Greg Johnson, professor of veterinary entomology at Montana State University. "We are just starting to pick up West Nile infected mosquitoes. The next few weeks will be important."

(More on **Mosquitoes**, page D2)



# SWEET SUMMER SAVINGS!



<p><b>'05 Pontiac G6 GT</b></p>  <p>#1972, White, Ebony Leather, Panoramic Sunroof, 3.6L, V6, AT, 24K</p> <p><b>Danhof Price \$15,900</b></p>	<p><b>'06 Buick Lucerne CXS</b></p>  <p>#1973A, Silver, Ebony Leather, 4.6L, V8, AT, 55K</p> <p><b>Danhof Price \$19,900</b></p>	<p><b>'03 Chevy Blazer S10</b></p>  <p>#1957A, Ebony Cloth, 4WD, V6, AT, 96K</p> <p><b>Danhof Price \$7,900</b></p>	<p><b>'04 Chevy Colorado Crew Cab</b></p>  <p>#3608, Orange, Tan Leather, 4WD, Tonneau Cover, 3.5L Inline 5, AT, 40K</p> <p><b>Danhof Price \$15,900</b></p>	<p><b>'06 Chevy Trailblazer Ext</b></p>  <p>#3612, Silverstone, Med Gray Cloth, DVD Player, 4.2L Inline 6, AT, 4WD, 32K</p> <p><b>Danhof Price \$15,900</b></p>	<p><b>'98 Chevy Ext Cab</b></p>  <p>#3579A, Victory Red, Gray Cloth, 350 V8, AT, 4WD, Topper, 109K</p> <p><b>Danhof Price \$6,900</b></p>
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## PHOTO OF THE WEEK

### WAVE RIDER

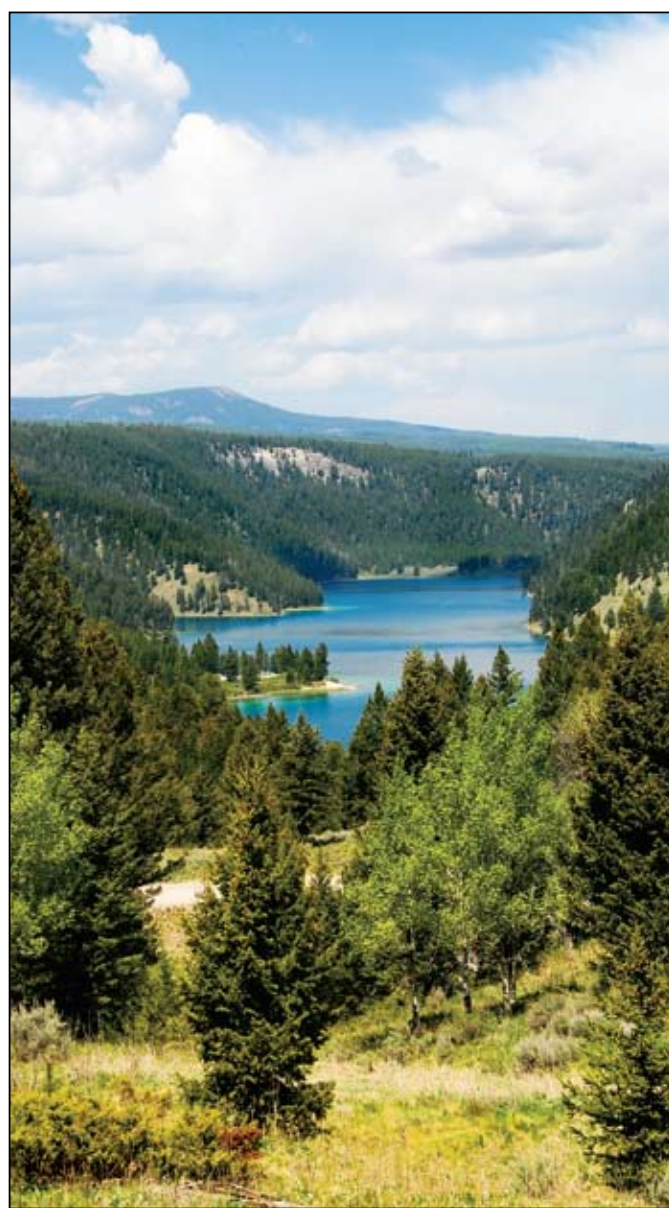
This week's photograph comes from Brad Grein. Grein snapped this shot from the back of a motorboat of Karen Davids waterskiing on Hebgen Lake.

### SUBMISSIONS

Send your photos to [OutThere@dailychronicle.com](mailto:OutThere@dailychronicle.com) or drop them off at the Chronicle front desk. Each week the Chronicle will select an image from the submissions and publish it in Thursday's OutThere section. Please include your name, address and phone number along with a brief description of the image including the location and names of those pictured.



## WHERE AM I?



BEN PIERCE/CHRONICLE

Tell us where in Montana this photo was taken. Winner will receive a prize. If more than one reader is correct, we'll have a drawing to select the winner. E-mail your guess to [OutThere@dailychronicle.com](mailto:OutThere@dailychronicle.com) or send a letter to the Chronicle, Attn: OutThere. Please include your name, address and phone number. Last week's winner was Annie Cannata of Bozeman who guessed South Cottonwood Creek just south of Bozeman.

## Mosquitoes

According to the Montana Department of Agriculture: "Most Montana mosquitoes do not transmit any known diseases. However, the sheer numbers produced in certain areas creates a very real pest problem, and can result in economic losses, not only due to lost recreational opportunities, but also due to impacts on livestock and wildlife."

Those mosquitoes that transmit West Nile virus do so by taking a blood meal from an infected bird. The virus takes five to seven days to mature in a mosquito and can then be transferred to humans, birds and horses bitten by the mosquito's piercing proboscis.

West Nile virus can be asymptomatic, meaning no ill effects are perceived by an infected individual. An estimated 20 percent of those with the virus will develop West Nile fever. Symptoms — lasting a few days to a few weeks — include fever, skin

rash, headache, fatigue, swollen lymph glands and body aches. An estimated one in 150 cases will develop symptoms of the severe disease including high fever, stupor, coma, convulsions and paralysis.

As of Aug. 5, no human-borne cases of West Nile virus in the state of Montana have been reported to the Center for Disease Control. The CDC has reported six cases of the virus in humans in North Dakota, one in Wyoming and three in Idaho. California leads the country in West Nile infections with 29.

Johnson said hotspots for West Nile virus in Montana include the Milk River along the Hi-Line, the Yellowstone River from Big Timber to the North Dakota border and the Missouri River around Great Falls.

"At this time of year, with the concerns about West Nile, we have to think about protection," Johnson said. "People need

to be aware that they need to do something."

The CDC recommends several measures for reducing the risk of contracting West Nile virus from infected mosquitoes including: "reducing time outdoors, particularly in early morning and evening hours, wearing long pants and long-sleeved shirts and applying mosquito repellent to exposed skin areas and clothing."

DEET and picaridin are the two active ingredients in insect repellents that are recommended by the CDC. DEET has been used in insect repellents for years and picaridin is sold under the trade name Cutter Advanced.

For more information about West Nile virus, visit [www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/westnile/index.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/westnile/index.htm)

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## OUT AND ABOUT

### FISH WEIR TO OPERATE ON MADISON RIVER

The Madison River fish weir will again be operational this summer and fall north of West Yellowstone between Baker's Hole Campground and the U.S. 191 Bridge. Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks personnel will install the weir

during the week of Aug. 18.

The weir is being used to trap and collect data from wild trout during their fall spawning migration. Each trapped fish is measured, weighed, examined for signs of disease and released. Rainbow and brown trout are also tagged with a uniquely numbered tag.

The fish trap is checked daily to minimize delaying fish on their upstream migration to spawning grounds and downstream post-spawning migration to Hebgen Reservoir. However, anglers are asked to refrain from targeting fish that may be concentrated immediately upstream and

downstream of the weir.

Boaters should use caution and portage vessels river-right around the weir.

Anglers who catch tagged rainbow and brown trout should report the tag color, number, date caught, and location of catch to FWP at (406) 682-7807.

### RED LODGE, MONTANA

2008 Summer Schedule of Events

Aug 16-17	Cowboy Mounted Shooting Event
Aug 22	Willie Nelson in concert
Aug 29-Sept 1	Last Blast Sidewalk Sale Downtown Red Lodge Merchants
Aug 30	Fun Run for Charities
Sept 1	Labor Day Arts Fair

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