

Mosquito

Agricultural drains as mosquito breeding sites

The Palo Verde Valley of southeastern California takes about a million acre-feet of irrigation water annually from the Colorado River. About half, after being used on cropland, is returned to the river at the lower end of the valley through a 150-mile complex of drains. As part of an intensive mosquito control effort, officials of the Palo Verde Irrigation District in Blythe asked University researchers in 1975 to assess the role of agricultural drains as mosquito-breeding sites and to evaluate the effectiveness of mechanical clearing of vegetation, which often clogs the waterways.

After careful study and analysis, entomologist Mir S. Mulla and associates concluded that the irrigation drains supported little larval breeding. Where there was breeding, clearing vegetation on one or both sides to facilitate water movement provided good control. They found that backwaters of the Colorado River probably produce more mosquitoes than the drains, but even this production is far less than in other surface water situations in the Palo Verde Valley. (*Dick Venne*)

Photo by Max Clover



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