

Expect yellowjackets, mosquitoes to arrive early

By Kathryn Reed

Flying critters may become problematic sooner this year in the Lake Tahoe Basin.

With temps being in the 60s for much of last week and the basin coming off a relatively dry winter, it means yellowjackets could be in abundance.

And despite the lack of water, it's impossible to completely skip mosquito season.

Vector control is already suggesting people get their traps out for the yellowjackets.

"We are expecting a little more activity this year. Because of the dry winter a queen can survive the winter," Karen Bender with El Dorado County Department of Environmental Health told *Lake Tahoe News*.

Each queen can have a colony of 5,000 wasps. (Yellowjackets are a wasp, not a bee.)

This area had a huge influx of the insects late last summer. Getting rid of the queen now can help prevent problems later on.

Trapping the bees is the easiest way to rid them from a residence or business. Traps, though, need to be set away from any entrances to a structure so the yellowjackets don't fly in.

If people have a hive, vector control will come spray. Vector control does not necessarily get rid of the hive, nor do employees do anything with nests that are indoors. El Dorado

County residents pay \$6 a year via property taxes for vector control, so home visits are free.

Most often hives are underground, under a deck or in the eaves. The underground ones are the most difficult to see because they could be under leaves or dirt. Step on one, though, and the stings will let you know you hit the jackpot.

When it comes to mosquitoes, Bender said her offices wants to know if people are getting bit. That way they can locate the standing water and treat it.

“There’s not a lot of water, but what we’re seeing right now is a higher concentration of (mosquito) larvae that we are treating,” Bender said. “We haven’t seen any flying mosquitoes.”

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Notes:

- People who have yellowjacket issues or concerns, should call 530.573.3197 or 530.573.3450.
- People who find dead birds should call 877.968.2473 or go online to find more info about West Nile virus.