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Despite being fall, the temperatures have remained warm and the air humid. These conditions seem to coincide with mosquitoes, particularly around ponds, where pond owners may find the quality of fishing experiences reduced.

Mosquitoes prefer still, shallow water where their aquatic larvae develop. So, how do you get rid of the mosquitoes that may be using your pond as a nursery without hurting your fish? Much of the problem can be solved in the design of the pond. Pond edges that are shallow can potentially provide ideal breeding conditions for mosquitoes. To avoid this, ponds should be constructed with deep edges. The benefit of deep pond edges goes beyond mosquito control. Losses from wading birds such as herons will be reduced, as well as fewer weeds along the edges.

The shallow and still water found around a pond are often accompanied increased vegetation. These plants will provide habitat for the mosquitoes, and serves to shelter them from wind. To avoid creating these 'dead zones' around a pond, a manager can limit the amount of weeds that grow in and around the pond.

In addition to designing a pond to limit the mosquito habitat, stocking programs can include biological controls that utilize insect larvae in their diet. Such species include

‘mosquito fish’. These animals feed on insect larvae, and can be useful in reducing the number of larvae that develop into adults. Residents of Baldwin County have a readily available source of mosquito fish (*Gambusia*) at the Baldwin County High School Aquaculture Facility. People who live within Baldwin County should call the school and arrange a time during school hours to stop by and pick up a few fish. You will not need many as these native fish readily reproduce in ponds and will begin eating mosquito larvae immediately. They survive our winters, and will be ready next spring to begin controlling the pests as soon as they appear. When you go to the school to get the fish, do not forget to bring a bucket to take them home in. A battery powered aerator that you may have for your bait bucket will also help make the ride back to your pond easier on them.

There are several chemical treatments for mosquito control in and around ponds. It is important to note that many chemical applications can be harmful to fish. Some chemicals require a special applicator license. Prior to any chemical application read and follow the label instructions, and if you have questions, seek the advice of a fisheries expert.

For additional questions or information, contact P.J. Waters, Auburn University Marine Extension and Research Center, 438-5690.