



Environmental Health Division • Public Information

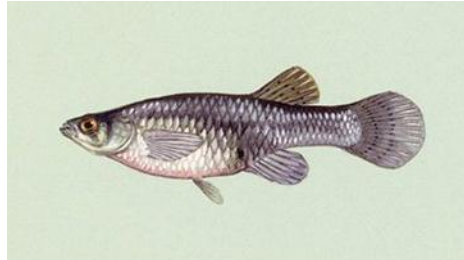
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USING FISH TO CONTROL MOSQUITOES

MOSQUITO FISH (*Gambusia affinis*)

Mosquito fish play a very important role in mosquito control in Ventura County. Because of their great appetite for mosquito larvae, Mosquito fish are very effective in preventing the production of mosquitoes in containers.

County staff will stock ponds or other suitable containers with fish for any resident of Ventura County.



Upon request, the Ventura Environmental Health Division will stock ponds or other suitable containers with fish for any resident of Ventura County.

Mosquito fish can tolerate a wide range of temperatures but may not survive winter in a shallow pond (less than 18 inches). The fish prefer the sunlit areas of the pond and do not thrive in a heavily shaded pond. At temperatures below 41° F, they move to the bottom, do not feed, and become inactive.

A mosquito fish is capable of eating 100-500 mosquito larvae per day. Feeding the fish is not necessary unless the pond is new and bare of vegetation or has recently been cleaned. In this case, tropical fish food flakes are suitable.

Predators - provide large rocks and vegetation for shelter from predators such as raccoons, opossums, cats, herons, and egrets. There should be rocks on the bottom at the deep end, where the fish will spend cold days in an inactive state. At other times, since the fish tend to spend the night at the edges, overhanging banks serve well to protect them.

Duckweed – Duckweed is a tiny floating plant that spreads quickly, covering the entire surface of the pond, especially when the water is polluted with rotten leaves or other heavy coverage of duckweed, it should be cleaned, and recurring duckweed kept to a minimum.

Algae - The algae that coats the rocks and pond bottom is beneficial, producing 60% of the oxygen, and is found in a well-balanced pond.



Filamentous algae may indicate an excess of organic debris. If it gets too thick the fish may not be able to get the mosquito larvae. Small amounts, however, are a good food source for the fish and shelter for the fry.