

Asian bush mosquito poses no immediate threat

On Tuesday, 12 August 2010, the local newspaper, Basler Zeitung, and the local radio, Radio Basilisk, said that researchers of Swiss TPH warn the Asian bush mosquito brings tropical disease to Basel.

What is true in the article is that Pie Müller, the mosquito expert from Swiss TPH identified the Asian bush mosquito (*Aedes japonicus*) in the forest of Allschwil. The mosquito has, however, previously already been reported from northern Switzerland (Schaffner et al. Med. Vet. Entomol. 23, 448-451, 2009). It has also been reported that West Nile virus (WNV) was detected in field-caught specimens of *Aedes japonicus* in the USA suggesting that this species might transmit WNV from birds to humans and other mammals.

Currently there is, however, no immediate threat that *Aedes japonicus* would spread tropical viruses in Basel. It is important to note that *Culex pipiens*, a very common local mosquito species in Basel might actually be a more likely resident vector for WNV. The recent emergence of *Aedes japonicus* in Basel does not directly imply an immediate threat. In Europe, albeit the presence of potential mosquito vectors, WNV has been reported in only a few isolated cases. Given the vector potential of this and other mosquito species researchers at Swiss TPH are surveilling the situation and will implement control measures where necessary.