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Mosquitofish vs. chloramines: Fish win one round

By ALEX BREITLER | Published: MARCH 3, 2016 | [Leave a comment](#)



Mosquitofish. Record file photo.

One of myriad concerns I've heard about chloramines in the drinking water is that they will derail efforts to control mosquitoes.

The San Joaquin County Mosquito & Vector Control District distributes mosquitofish that residents can dump into their ponds or pools. The tiny fish eat mosquito larvae and help control the skeeter population.

Chloramines are toxic to fish. So, the thinking goes, if the mosquitofish go belly up because of chloramines, mosquitoes will thrive and spread disease.

I asked the mosquito district about this a month or two ago, and officials there said they would look into it. The results of their unscientific investigation are promising.

They put water from north Stockton, where the chloramines are used, into five-gallon buckets. And they introduced some mosquitofish.

The end result: "We found that there was little, if any, mortality to fish introduced to the treated water," says a [brief report from the general manager](#) (see pg. 14).

Again, this wasn't a scientific study. But it would seem to be good news.

Mosquito officials do intend to remind residents about this change in the water when they distribute mosquitofish this spring. They plan to advise residents to let water sit for a couple of days in ponds or pools before introducing the fish. (Chloramines are long-lived; it can take days for them to dissipate from the water.)

And when they deliver mosquitofish to people's homes, officials will take a look at the circumstances and make case-by-case recommendations, said district spokesman Aaron Devenenzi.

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Whether chloramines are a problem for mosquitofish or not, in many cases it's a moot point. The mosquitofish tend to be used most often in stagnant ponds and pools where the water has already been sitting for a long time, Devencenzi said. So those fish shouldn't have a problem with chloramines unless new water is added, and even then, the bucket investigation suggests there might be little to worry about.

Eat away, friendly fish. I've been seeing mosquitos all winter and it's not going to get any better this spring.



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