

*Insects.*  
The 4-year-old sloughs in  
**Mosquitoes a problem that won't — slap! — go away**

By **TOM LONG**  
Sentinel staff writer

5-15-91

**SANTA CRUZ** — The rains of March which helped stave off water woes throughout this county are now giving birth to tens of thousands of new county residents — mosquitoes.

"I feel like bait!" said Zoe Nelson, who lives off Green Valley Road in Watsonville. "We can't even go out in our back yard. I got a bite on my wrist the other day that was so bad I couldn't even get my watch on."

It's a common complaint and it's likely to stay common in the following months, said Ilsa Kolbus of

the county's Environmental Health Department.

And since the county has no mosquito abatement program, there doesn't seem to be much help in sight.

"We normally have problems through the warmer months," said Kolbus. "There's not a lot we can do."

"You go out at nighttime, you're going to get mosquitoes," said Embert Knauss, public works director for the city of Watsonville, where stagnant water in the sloughs has proven to be a fertile breeding ground for mosquitoes.

Knauss even called Monterey

County's mosquito abatement program and tried to purchase mosquito fish which eat the bug's larvae. Unfortunately, Monterey County has mosquito problems of its own and no fish to spare to de-egg Watsonville's sloughs.

Santa Cruz County has no mosquito abatement program. Such programs, which often use pesticides to control mosquito breeding and are generally paid for through special taxes on residents, have to clear a number of bureaucratic hoops before they are approved by the state.

"There's a lot of life going on in  
*Please see MOSQUITOES — A12*

## Mosquitoes

*Continued from Page A1*

the sloughs," said Knauss. "You could harm things if you didn't put the right stuff on."

But, Knauss said, "I believe myself Santa Cruz County does need a district."

Still, such a district isn't going to appear in time to battle this year's invasion of the bloodsuckers. Luckily, said county Health Officer Dr. Ira Lubell, the mosquito uprising is more nuisance than serious danger to human health.

"They're the wrong kind of mosquitoes to carry (human-infecting) bugs," said Lubell. "They are basically household mosquitoes, related to the rain we've had."

In some cases, where people live near ravines, gullies, creeks or ponds, there is little that can be

done about the problem. "If people are getting it from a large existing water body, there's not a lot they can do," said environmental health's Kolbus.

But mosquitoes can breed in any stagnant water, and sometimes those breeding places can be eradicated. "People are urged to tell their neighbors to get rid of that tire filled with water in the garden, to look under that barrel of water and empty it," said Lubell.

Still, just cleaning up your own property or making sure neighbors are cleaning up theirs isn't a sure cure either, said Knauss.

"Mosquitoes go quite a ways from where they breed," said Knauss. "Several miles, according to the guys from Monterey."