

PRESS RELEASE

Culebra joins the fight against mosquitoes

and arboviral disease outbreaks

* The Puerto Rico Vector Control Unit, together with the International Rotary Club, launches a project to control the *Aedes aegypti* mosquito in the Municipality of Culebra.

*Culebra, Puerto Rico* – [The Puerto Rico Vector Control Unit](https://prvectorcontrol.org/) (PRVCU) sponsored by the International Rotary Club and the Rotary Club of San Juan, and in collaboration with the Municipality of Culebra, will begin a project to control the *Aedes aegypti* mosquito through a variety of community efforts. The initiative aims to control mosquitoes and prevent epidemics caused by the viruses they transmit.

“Naturally, the coronavirus has been the main concern for many people, but we cannot let our guard down on mosquito-borne diseases because they remain a threat. We must educate ourselves and take concrete actions to control mosquito populations and mitigate the spread of diseases such as dengue, Zika and chikungunya,” said Dr. Marianyoly Ortiz, Associate Director of the Puerto Rico Vector Control Unit, a program of the Puerto Rico Science, Technology and Research Trust. The project is undertaken through a collaborative agreement with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

For his part, Dr. Julio Soto, spokesperson for the Rotary Club of San Juan, noted, “The vector control project is an important component in eliminating the population of *Aedes aegypti* mosquitoes. The results will be vital for the community of Culebra and will also give way to future initiatives in Vieques, Puerto Rico and the rest of the Caribbean. It is an honor for the Rotary Club to sponsor this project."

As part of the project, members of the PRVCU team will visit the communities every 45 days to work on reducing hatcheries and use larvicides in hatcheries that cannot be eliminated. Additionally, surveys to measure knowledge, attitudes, and practices regarding the *Aedes aegypti* mosquito will be carried out in each of the impacted residences. To monitor the efforts and their effects on the mosquito population, surveillance AGO traps will be installed in various structures of the municipality. AGO traps do not use insecticides and do not harm people or pets. They are designed to attract and capture the female *Aedes aegypti* mosquito that is ready to lay her eggs.

Culebra mayor Edilberto Romero commented, “The need to control mosquitoes on this municipal island is a priority for me, because the wellbeing of my constituents is my priority as mayor. Studying, controlling, and eliminating mosquitoes will help us reduce diseases transmitted by bites. Knowledge and education are the basis for the prosperity of a people." For her part, Dulce María del Río-Pineda, co-founder and coordinator of Mujeres de Isla, Inc. in Culebra, noted, “We have actively participated in this effort in Culebra since first hearing about it. We look forward to collaborating and to helping our communities by addressing this health issue.”

“We want Culebra residents to continue to learn about mosquito bites and arboviral diseases so that they are aware that a bite could indicate the development of a serious illness and the need for early medical attention. Therefore, in compliance with health safety regulations, training will be carried out so that residents can participate in the project and take action to reduce mosquito populations across the municipality,” said Ortiz.

For more information about how to prevent the spread of the *Aedes aegypti* mosquito and other related issues, access the Puerto Rico Vector Control Unit’s [Facebook page](https://www.facebook.com/PRVectorControl) or [www.prvectorcontrol.org](http://www.prvectorcontrol.org/).

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**About the Puerto Rico Vector Control Unit**The Puerto Rico Vector Control Unit is a program of the Puerto Rico Science, Technology and Research Trust, created in 2016 by a collaboration agreement with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. PRVCU was established to strengthen the island's capacity to control the *Aedes aegypti* mosquito, which is a vector of dengue, Zika, and chikungunya in Puerto Rico.**About the Puerto Rico Science, Technology and Research Trust**

The Puerto Rico Science, Technology and Research Trust, as described in Public Law 214, is a non-profit organization created in 2004 to promote the participation and creation of jobs on the island in the global knowledge economy by promoting investment and financing of research and development of science and technology. By investing in research and commercialization of technology, the Trust serves as a catalyst for job creation and retention of the island's highly skilled and bilingual residents. It is also responsible for Puerto Rico's public policy for science, technology, research, and development. For more information: [www.prsciencetrust.org](http://www.prsciencetrust.org)