

CULEX MOSQUITOES

West Nile disease



Name ***Culex pipiens***
Length **10 mm**
Longevity as a biting insect **2 weeks**
Special feature **also bites birds**

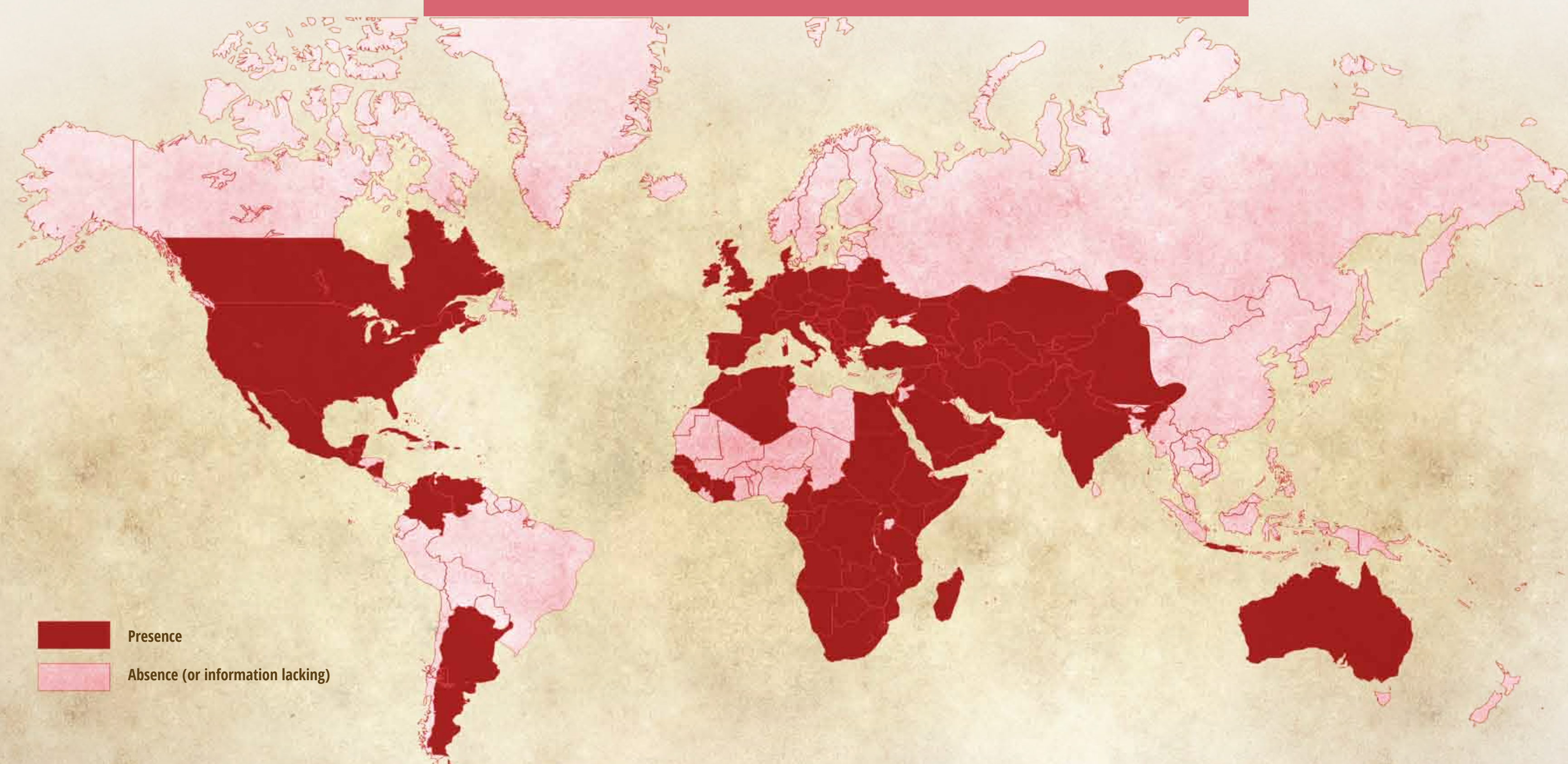
Biology of the vector

Female mosquitoes lay eggs on the surface of the water, where they form small floating clumps. *Culex* mosquitoes are the main vectors of the West Nile Disease and are found in marshes, irrigated farmland and in towns, even in polluted water.



Geographic distribution

Distribution of the West Nile virus



Culex colonise all ecosystems in all the continents. Since 1999, 1,550 deaths have been reported in the USA.

Epidemics-sometimes urban-have also occurred in Europe.

The number of cases in Africa, where the virus is endemic, is not known with any accuracy.

Vector transmission

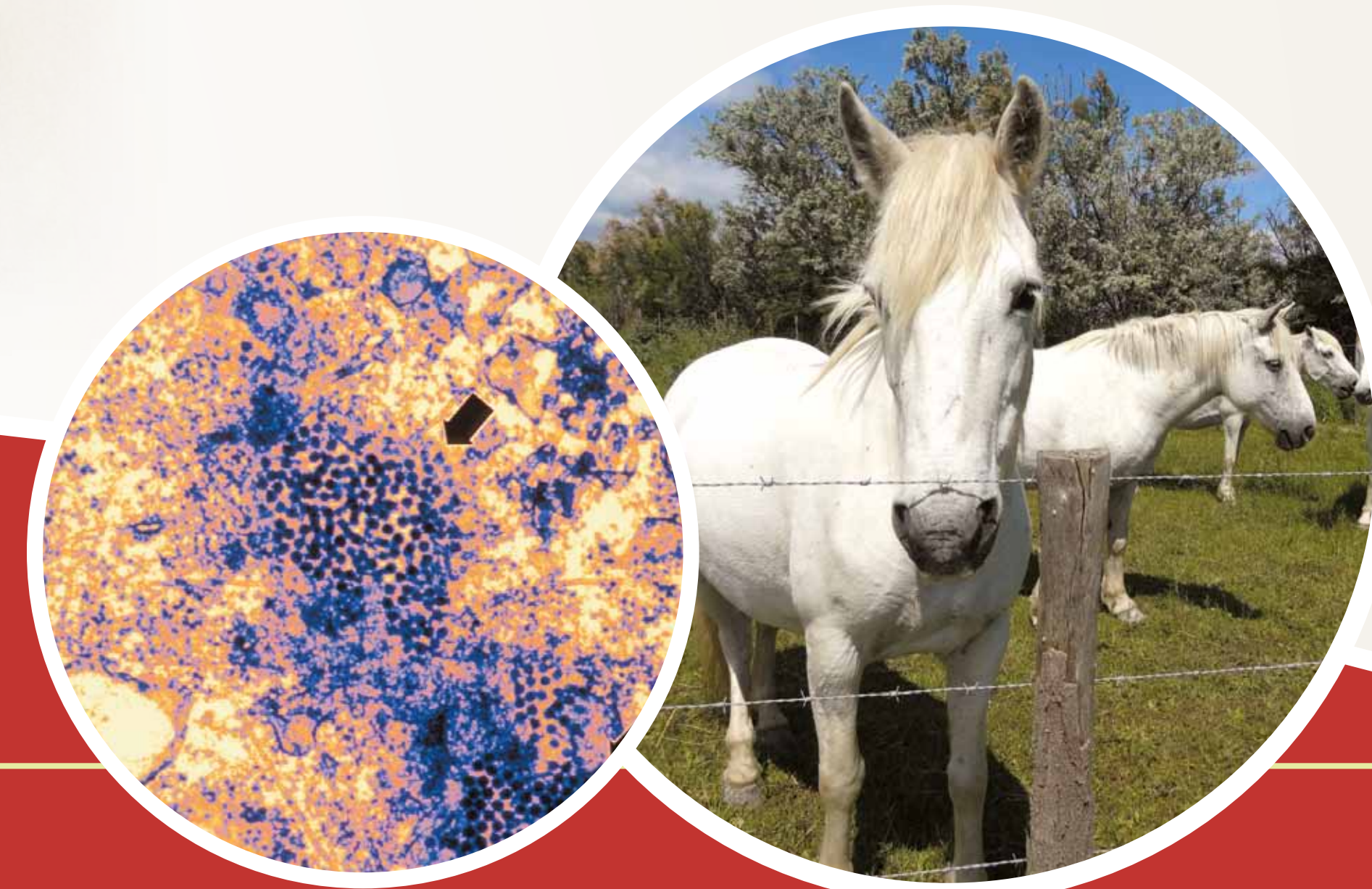
The *West Nile* virus, transmitted by *Culex* mosquitoes, mainly infects birds.

Of African origin, the virus is carried to other continents by migratory species.

European, Asian and North American mosquitoes are infected by birds carrying the virus. In turn they infect at a local level

other birds or humans and horses that share their environment.

The *West Nile* virus targets the nervous systems of hosts. It causes muscle pains, fever and headaches in humans. The disease can cause sometimes fatal encephalitis.



Prevention and control

There is neither a vaccine nor a drug to combat infection by the *West Nile* virus. In view of this, measures must be taken for protection against mosquitoes:

- Reduce the aquatic habitats suitable for larvae
- Use chemical or biological insecticides
- Protect against bites by using repellents, clothes that cover the body well and sleep under a mosquito net



The virus spreads from birds -the main target-to humans via mosquitoes

