

Genetically modified mosquitoes are now hatching in the Florida Keys. Scientists and residents concerned about Zika and other viral diseases couldn't be more pleased. Here's why

geneticliteracyproject.org/2021/05/17/genetically-modified-mosquitoes-are-now-hatching-in-the-florida-keys-scientists-and-residents-concerned-about-zika-and-other-viral-diseases-couldnt-be-more-pleased-heres-why/

Donavyn Coffey | [Scientific American](#) | May 17, 2021



Credit: Victor Moriyama/Getty Images

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[M]osquito eggs placed in the Florida Keys are expected to hatch tens of thousands of genetically modified mosquitoes, a result of the first U.S. release of such insects in the wild. A biotechnology firm called Oxitec delivered the eggs in late April as part of a federally approved experiment to study the use of genetic engineering—rather than insecticides—to control disease-carrying mosquito populations.

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If the current pilot effort is successful, the firm is set to release as many as 20 million more males in the prime of Florida's mosquito season later this year... To learn more about the risks and rewards of Florida's foray into bioengineered pest control, [Scientific American](#)

spoke with Omar Akbari, a molecular biologist whose lab works on genetic control technologies at the University of California, San Diego.

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“[The company has] reported reaching *A. aegypti* population suppression of more than 90 percent in many of their releases, including effective control of the *A. aegypti* population in Brazil. Given its prior testing, the experiment in the Keys is likely to work and to suppress *A. aegypti* populations. And hopefully it will directly translate into an epidemiological impact, effectively reducing disease transmission,” [Akbari said.]

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