

Florida mulls drone war on the mosquito

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(Phys.org) —Drones are often associated with war and running down criminals, but this week drones for another purpose have made news. Florida is about to test how drones will do in tracking down mosquitoes. The Florida Keys Mosquito Control District, in its ongoing mission to make the job of killing mosquitos more efficient, is exploring unmanned aerial vehicles equipped with infrared cameras as one option for mosquito control. The goal is not to use drones to fight the insects but to use the UAVs to spot shallow-water pools where mosquitoes breed, up and down the Keys. Once the pools are found, ground action would begin, with attacks on these pests at the larval stage with larvicides.

District Director Michael Doyle has invited several government agencies to a test flight on August 26. The drones, which resemble hawks in flight, are from Condor Aerial, of North Carolina; the company will send a rep to operate the [test flight](#). According to the Condor Aerial website, the battery-powered drones are capable of up to 90 minutes of flight at one time.

The battery-powered UAV in mind is the Maveric drone, outfitted with a shortwave [infrared camera](#). The drone can fly 90 minutes at a time, is 2.2-pounds and 2.5-feet long. Condor Aerial, with a motto of "Providing Tomorrow's Technology to Law Enforcement," has been focused on providing aerial surveillance for [law enforcement agencies](#) but Doyle's interest is to see what the [short wave](#) infrared camera can accomplish.

According to KeysNet.com, Doyle said that deploying the camera may result in their being able to detect the shallow water areas which the department needs to identify. "If we can find the water, we can kill the mosquitoes. The real challenge is finding the water quickly enough," Doyle said. Finding the water quickly means the district could move quickly to treat the areas with larvicide.

Mosquito control professionals in Florida are turning to [drones](#) as part of their demanding work to find ways to control mosquito populations. The Keys has over 40 mosquito species; mosquitoes can transmit dengue fever, encephalitis, malaria, and dog heartworm. As the story goes, the first attempt in the Keys toward mosquito control was in 1929, with the setting up of a bat tower. The idea was that the bats would eat the mosquitoes. The bats flew away, but local town wits [said](#) the mosquitoes ate the bats.

More information: www.condoraerial.com/FAQ.html
[www.keysnet.com/2013/08/10/488 ... eyes-drones-for.html](http://www.keysnet.com/2013/08/10/488...eyes-drones-for.html)

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