



News Release

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CHICKEN, BIRD, AND MOSQUITOES TEST POSITIVE FOR WEST NILE VIRUS IN CONTRA COSTA COUNTY

– First chicken reported this year–

CONCORD, CALIFORNIA - - A sentinel chicken from Holland Tract has tested positive for West Nile virus, the first this year in Contra Costa County. The Contra Costa Mosquito and Vector Control District is also reporting a group of mosquitoes from Holland Tract and a Cooper's hawk from Danville that have tested positive for the virus.

“Virus-positive chickens are pretty significant,” said Deborah Bass, spokeswoman for the District. “Chickens are kept in coops which tells us that the virus transmission from mosquitoes did indeed occur at a specific location.”

So far this year there have been 14 groups of mosquitoes, 13 dead birds, and one chicken that have tested positive for West Nile virus in Contra Costa County.

Residents are urged to wear mosquito repellents with the ingredients DEET, Picaridin or Oil of Lemon Eucalyptus.

The public is reminded to also report neglected swimming pools or other water sources where mosquitoes emerge. Reports may be made anonymously.

To understand possible mosquito water sources in residential yards, visit the District's Web site http://intranet.ccmvcd.net:8089/pdf/mosquito_proof_yard.pdf

Most people who are bitten by a mosquito with West Nile virus will not get sick; however, up to 20 percent of the population infected with West Nile virus will get West Nile fever. West Nile fever causes people to experience mild to severe flu-like symptoms such as fever, headache, body ache and possible paralysis. Less than one percent of infected individuals will require hospitalization. The elderly and those with compromised immune systems are most susceptible to illness and death caused by West Nile virus.

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Residents are urged to take the following precautions:

- DEFEND yourself against mosquitoes by using a repellent with an effective active ingredient such as DEET, Picaridin or Oil of Lemon Eucalyptus. Make sure to follow label directions.
- DRAIN all sources of standing water that may support mosquito-breeding habitats. Residential sources can be a big producer of mosquitoes in Contra Costa County.
- DOOR and window screens should fit tight and be in good repair. This will prevent mosquitoes from entering your home.
- DO vaccinate your horses. Horses are highly susceptible to West Nile virus - approximately half of the horses that get West Nile virus die or have to be euthanized.
- DAWN and DUSK are times to avoid being outdoors since this is when mosquitoes are most active.
- DRESS appropriately by wearing long sleeves and pants when outdoors and mosquitoes are present.
- DEAD birds should be reported to 877-WNV-BIRD (877-968-2473) or online at www.westnile.ca.gov. Not all birds will be picked up and tested, but reporting dead birds provides important information for mosquito control efforts.

People wishing to be notified about adult mosquito fogging or spraying in residential areas have several options. They may visit the District's Web site at www.ccmvcd.dst.ca.us and opt to receive the notifications automatically by e-mail; they can view information on the District's Web site; or they may phone the District for a recorded message at (925) 771-6195.

Contra Costa Mosquito & Vector Control District, a public health agency, is located at 155 Mason Circle in Concord. Call the District to report mosquito problems at (925) 771-6195 or visit their office between 8:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. to get FREE mosquitofish for ornamental ponds or horse troughs.

For information concerning human West Nile virus symptoms, prevention, or testing, please call the Contra Costa Health Services department at (888) 959-9911 or visit their Web site at <http://cchealth.org>.

For information concerning West Nile virus and horses, please visit the California Department of Food and Agriculture Animal Health Branch at www.cdffa.ca.gov/ahgss/ah/wnv_info.htm or call them at (916) 654-1447.