



NEWS RELEASE

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SECOND DEAD BIRD TESTS POSITIVE FOR WEST NILE VIRUS IN CONTRA COSTA COUNTY

-Reports from public remain important tool for West Nile virus response-

CONCORD, CALIFORNIA - - A dead Western scrub jay found in Antioch has tested positive for West Nile virus, the second infected bird documented in Contra Costa County this year. Last month there was one infected dead bird found in Alamo and one group of virus-positive mosquitoes trapped in Holland Tract.

“Dead bird reports remain an important tool in our surveillance and control efforts,” said Deborah Bass, spokeswoman for the District. “Even if we are unable to retrieve the birds for testing, the reports alone help us to understand where the risk of West Nile virus transmission is elevated so that we may aggressively seek and treat mosquitoes before they infect people.”

Since the arrival of West Nile virus in Contra Costa County in 2004, 22 people have been documented with the disease and two have died. This year in California one person has been documented with the virus so far, as well as 184 dead birds, 57 samples of mosquitoes, two sentinel chickens and one horse. Last year at this time, there were two people confirmed with the virus, along with 100 dead birds, 73 samples of mosquitoes, and four sentinel chickens.

Most people who are bitten by a mosquito with WNV will not get sick; however, up to 20 percent of the population infected with WNV 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 WNV.

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 WNV die or have to be euthanized.

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IN CONTRA COSTA COUNTY**

DAWN and DUSK are times to avoid being outdoor 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 www.westnile.ca.gov . Not all birds will be picked up and tested, but reporting dead birds provides important information for mosquito control efforts.

To learn if the District is spraying for adult mosquitoes in Contra Costa County, please visit the district's website at www.ccmvcd.dst.ca.us or call the District at (925) 771-6195 for a recorded message. **Adult mosquito spray notifications by email are also available** by signing up on the website.

Contra Costa Mosquito & Vector Control District 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 website at www.ccpublichealth.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/ahfss/ah/wnv_info.htm or call them at (916) 654-1447.

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