



## NEWS RELEASE

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**Contact:** Deborah Bass  
Public Affairs Manager  
(925) 685-9301, ext. 112  
(925) 260-4670 cell  
[dbass@ccmecd.net](mailto:dbass@ccmecd.net)  
[www.ccmecd.dst.ca.us](http://www.ccmecd.dst.ca.us)

### **BIRD INFECTED WITH WEST NILE VIRUS FOUND IN CONCORD**

**CONCORD, CALIFORNIA** - The Contra Costa Mosquito & Vector Control District (the District) reports that a dead bird found in Concord has tested positive for West Nile virus (WNV), the sixth bird for all of Contra Costa County this year. The bird, a scrub jay, was found near Cowell Road and Treat Blvd. on Friday, July 22, 2005 and tested at the District the same day. There have been no human or horse cases to date in Contra Costa County. Last week, the District reported a sample of mosquitoes near Brentwood that tested positive for West Nile virus.

“We are getting great support from our residents in helping us to understand where the infected birds are dying,” said Deborah Bass, spokeswoman for the District. “Dead bird reports enable us to concentrate our mosquito control efforts in areas where it is needed to stay proactive in our response to this disease”.

West Nile virus is one of a group of disease-causing viruses spread by mosquitoes. It first appeared in the United States in 1999. The virus is transmitted to humans and animals through the bite of an infected mosquito. Mosquitoes become infected with WNV when they feed on infected birds.

There have been 21 human infections of WNV from nine counties detected in California in 2005, including the first human death from WNV in Kings County in 2005.

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.

To reduce the risk of being bitten by mosquitoes or contracting WNV, residents are urged to take the following precautions:

- **DEFEND** yourself against mosquitoes by using an effective repellent, such as DEET, Picaridin or Oil of Lemon or Eucalyptus. Make sure to follow label directions.

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- DRAIN all sources of standing water that may support mosquito-breeding habitats. Residential sources are the biggest breeder of mosquitoes in Contra Costa County.
- DOOR and window screens should be in good repair. This will prevent mosquitoes from entering your home.
- DAWN and DUSK are times to avoid 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). Not all birds will be picked up and tested, but reporting dead birds provides crucial information for mosquito control efforts.

Contra Costa Mosquito & Vector Control District is located at 155 Mason Circle in Concord. Call the District to report mosquito problems at (925) 685-9301, or visit our office between 8:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. to get mosquitofish. Visit our website [www.ccmvcd.dst.ca.us](http://www.ccmvcd.dst.ca.us) for more information or to learn about possible mosquito spraying in your area.

For information concerning 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](http://www.ccpublichealth.org)