



NEWS RELEASE

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DANVILLE BIRD TESTS POSITIVE FOR WEST NILE VIRUS

CONCORD, CALIFORNIA - A dead scrub jay found in Danville tested positive for West Nile virus today at the Contra Costa Mosquito & Vector Control District (the District). The bird, found near the intersection of Green Valley Road and Diablo Road, is the fourth bird to test positive this year in Contra Costa County for West Nile virus. The first three birds that tested positive this year for West Nile virus were probably infected in 2004. This is the first bird that has tested positive that was likely infected this year. There have been no human cases, horses, or mosquitoes found with the virus in Contra Costa County to date.

“We have certainly tackled West Nile virus head on with our aggressive surveillance and control efforts – doubling our mosquito control staff, tripling our education personnel, increasing our traps and such,” said Craig Downs, general manager for the District. “However, the cooler weather we had this Spring helped delay the virus season. Now that it’s hot, it’s not surprising that we have another positive bird. Hot weather and mosquitoes go hand-in-hand.”

Experts are predicting Northern California to be the epicenter of West Nile virus this year. The virus is one of a group of disease-causing viruses spread by mosquitoes. It is transmitted to humans and animals through the bite of an infected mosquito and cannot be spread person to person. Mosquitoes become infected with WNV when they feed on infected birds.

“Residents should continue to be diligent in getting rid of standing water around their homes,” said Deborah Bass, spokeswoman for the District. “We simply can’t say enough how important not breeding mosquitoes in the first place is. It’s a simple, but life-saving task.”

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

- Drain all sources of standing water around your house to prevent mosquito breeding. Residential sources are the number one source of mosquitoes in Contra Costa County.
- Report dead birds to 877-WNV-BIRD (877-968-2473). Not all birds will be picked up and tested, but reporting dead birds is crucial information for mosquito control efforts.
- Repair window and door screens to prevent mosquitoes from entering buildings
- Wear long sleeves and pants if outdoors when mosquitoes are present.

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- Use a repellent containing the ingredient DEET.
- Stock mosquitofish (available FREE from the District) in backyard ponds and horse troughs. Mosquitofish can eat up to 500 mosquito larvae a day.

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 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