



NEWS RELEASE

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MOSQUITOES INFECTED WITH WEST NILE VIRUS CONFIRMED IN CONTRA COSTA COUNTY

--First time mosquitoes with West Nile virus found in Contra Costa County--

CONCORD, CALIFORNIA - A mosquito sample tested positive late Friday at the Contra Costa Mosquito and Vector Control District (District) for West Nile virus (WNV). The pooled sample containing 40 mosquitoes was collected in an unincorporated area south of Brentwood near Marsh Creek Road and Walnut Blvd. This is the first documented case of mosquitoes infected with WNV in Contra Costa County. To date, four birds out of 251 tested have been positive for the virus in the County this year, but no human or horse cases have been documented.

"This is the first true evidence of West Nile virus transmission in our county. Since the mosquitoes travel no more than a couple of miles from where they are born, we know they are feeding on local infected birds," said Dr. Steve Schutz, scientific programs manager for the District. "We've tested 16 dead birds from the Brentwood area this year. A single bird that tested positive for WNV back in February may have been infected during the previous season. Our surveillance system is working in that it helps us to concentrate our control efforts where they are most needed".

According to Carlos Sanabria, lead vector control inspector for the District, "We have already doubled our work force county wide, and we are now sending additional personnel to the Brentwood area to set extra traps and locate and treat mosquito larval sources. If appropriate, we will also be spraying in the area to knock down the adult mosquitoes. The good news is that in spite of the hot weather, our adult mosquito counts have remained low and our technicians are working hard to keep it that way".

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.

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.

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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 of Eucalyptus. Make sure to follow label directions.
- DRAIN all sources of standing water that may support mosquito-breeding habitats.
- 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 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