



NEWS RELEASE

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DEAD BIRD TESTS POSITIVE FOR WEST NILE VIRUS IN CONTRA COSTA COUNTY *-District reports first positive case of West Nile virus in 2006-*

CONCORD, CALIFORNIA - - A dead bird found in Oakley has tested positive for West Nile virus, the first positive West Nile virus case in Contra Costa County in 2006.

“The season got off to a late start this year due to cooler springtime temperatures,” said Dr. Steve Schutz, scientific programs manager for the District. “But ample water sources and high temperatures are the perfect formula for mosquito breeding and therefore virus transmission.”

Last year in Contra Costa County there were 11 human cases, 94 dead birds, 18 chickens, four mosquito samples (groups of mosquitoes), ten horses, and 25 squirrels that tested positive for West Nile virus. So far in California this year, there has been one human case, 45 dead birds, six chickens and 22 mosquito samples that have tested positive for the virus.

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 are the biggest 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 are euthanized.

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.

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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 important information for mosquito control efforts.

To learn if the District is spraying for adult mosquitoes in your neighborhood in Contra Costa County, please visit the district's website at www.ccmvcd.dst.ca.us or call (925) 685-9301 for a recorded message.

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 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 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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