



NEWS RELEASE

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MORE MOSQUITOES AND BIRDS INFECTED WITH WEST NILE VIRUS FOUND IN CONTRA COSTA COUNTY

-- Residents participate in locating dead birds via state hotline --

CONCORD, CALIFORNIA - - One mosquito sample and four birds have tested positive for West Nile virus in Contra Costa County this week. The mosquito sample comes from Bethel Island and is the second sample from Bethel Island and the third in the county to test positive for the virus to date. Three birds collected in late July and one collected today also tested positive for the virus this week. The first bird, a Sparrow, was found in Concord near Willow Pass Road and Farm Bureau Road. The second bird, a house finch, was found in Discovery Bay near Discovery Bay Blvd. and Sand Point Road. The third bird, a crow, was found in Brentwood near Balfour Road and Walnut Blvd. The fourth bird, a scrub jay, was also found in Brentwood near Central Blvd. and Fairview Avenue.

“All calls to the dead bird hotline are important, even if we are not able to pick up the dead birds, since the reports themselves are invaluable to our mosquito control efforts,” said Deborah Bass, public affairs manager for the District. “Residents simply call the hotline, answer simple questions about the birds condition to determine whether the bird is a candidate for testing, and then they are instructed to either discard the bird or wait for a technician to pick it up”.

This year, over 2000 calls have been made to the state dead bird hotline from Contra Costa County residents, the sixth largest call volume for any county in the state.

To date in Contra Costa County, there have been a total of 13 birds and three mosquito samples that have tested positive for West Nile virus. There have been no human or horse cases in the county to date. In California this year, there have been two West Nile virus-related fatalities, one each in Kings and Riverside counties.

Contra Costa Mosquito and Vector Control District technicians are setting out extra traps today to understand the extent of the adult mosquito populations, as well as checking and treating known mosquito sources and scouring the area for new ones. Technicians will also be visiting homeowners in the area to discuss possible breeding sources and handing out literature.

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.

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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 breeder 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.
- 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 important information for mosquito control efforts.
- DO vaccinate your horses. Horses are highly susceptible to West Nile virus – approximately half of the horses that get WNV die or are euthanized.

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