



## NEWS RELEASE

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### **TWO GROUPS OF MOSQUITOES IN MARTINEZ TEST POSITIVE FOR WEST NILE VIRUS**

*– District reminds public to wear mosquito repellent and report dead birds –*

**CONCORD, CALIFORNIA** - - Two groups of mosquitoes trapped in Martinez on April 3 have tested positive for West Nile virus, the second and third virus-positive mosquito groups in Contra Costa County this year. The mosquitoes were trapped in a marsh area north of Highway 4.

Last week, the first group of mosquitoes to test positive for West Nile virus in Contra Costa County this year was announced, nine weeks earlier than last year's first group of infected mosquitoes.

“This mosquito species tends to stay in the tules, so the risk is mainly to people in and around the marsh areas,” said Deborah Bass, spokeswoman for the District. “Wearing mosquito repellent remains the best precaution people can take. We ask that residents please continue to report dead birds to the hotline since those reports are crucial to our surveillance and control efforts.”

One of the suspected mechanisms for the re-introduction of West Nile virus each year is that infected female mosquitoes 'hibernate' over the winter and emerge the next season to start the cycle again. One reason for the early emergence of infected mosquitoes this year could be the unusually warm weather we experienced in January when temperatures reached nearly 80 degrees.

Since the arrival of West Nile virus in Contra Costa County in 2004, 27 people have been documented with the disease and two have died. 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 can be a big producer of mosquitoes in Contra Costa County.

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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 have to be 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.

DEAD birds should be reported to the California Department of Public Health's Dead Bird Hotline at 877-WNV-BIRD (877-968-2473) or on their Web site <http://www.westnile.ca.gov/>. Not all birds will be picked up and tested, but reporting dead birds provides crucial information for mosquito control efforts.

People wishing to be notified about adult mosquito fogging or spraying have several options. They may visit the District's Web site at [www.ccmvcd.dst.ca.us](http://www.ccmvcd.dst.ca.us) and opt to receive the notifications automatically by email, they can view information on the District Web site, or they may phone the District for a recorded message at (925) 771-6195.

Contra Costa Mosquito & Vector Control District is located at 155 Mason Circle in Concord. Call the District to report mosquito problems at (925) 771-6195, 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 human 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.cchealth.org](http://www.cchealth.org). Human West Nile virus cases can be found at [http://www.cchealth.org/topics/west\\_nile/cases.php](http://www.cchealth.org/topics/west_nile/cases.php)

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](http://www.cdffa.ca.gov/ahfss/ah/wnv_info.htm) or call them at (916) 654-1447.