



NEWS RELEASE

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MOSQUITO AND VECTOR CONTROL DISTRICT URGES RESIDENTS TO RID MOSQUITO SOURCES FROM THEIR PROPERTIES

--District also reports one more West Nile virus horse case and five more birds--

CONCORD, CALIFORNIA - - The Contra Costa Mosquito & Vector Control District (District) is asking residents for help in combating West Nile virus (WNV) by checking for and eliminating all standing water from their property.

“It’s simple, but life-saving advice”, said Deborah Bass, public affairs manager for the District. “Most mosquitoes come from private property. Given that mosquitoes can breed in as little as a capful of water, we need and urge residents to walk their property and find and dump any standing water to help us in the fight against West Nile virus.”

Yesterday, the District received confirmation that a second horse located in East Contra Costa County has tested positive for the virus and is now recovering. Five more dead birds have tested positive for the virus as well. They include an American crow that was found in Pleasant Hill, a scrub jay that was found outside the Clayton area, two scrub jays that were found in Brentwood, and one scrub jay that was found in Antioch.

As of today, the District is not picking up and testing dead birds that are reported in Brentwood since it is well documented that West Nile virus is present in the area. The District is asking residents to continue to report the dead birds to 1-877-WNV-BIRD since the reports themselves yield valuable information for mosquito control efforts.

To date in Contra Costa County there have been a total of 21 birds, three mosquito samples, two horses, and one person that have tested positive for West Nile virus. In California, there have been five West Nile virus-related fatalities and 174 people that have been diagnosed with the disease this year. Approximately half of the 148 horses that have tested positive for the virus have either died or been euthanized.

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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Residents are urged to take the following precautions:

DO vaccinate your horses. Horses are highly susceptible to West Nile virus – approximately half of the horses that get WNV die or are euthanized.

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.

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 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.

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

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.