



MOSQUITO AND VECTOR MANAGEMENT DISTRICT OF SANTA BARBARA COUNTY

ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT OF HUMAN DISEASE VECTORS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

West Nile Virus Detected in Santa Barbara County

SUMMERLAND, California, October 12, 2015. Two dead birds, one from the Tuckers Grove area near Goleta and one from Santa Ynez, have tested positive for West Nile virus (WNV) infection via examination by the California Department of Public Health's Dead Bird West Nile Virus Detection Program. This is in addition to the detection of WNV in mosquitoes around Lake Los Carneros earlier this year.

West Nile virus infection can cause a flu-like illness in humans. Less than 1% of people infected with West Nile virus will develop a serious neurologic illness such as encephalitis or meningitis. Most people who get infected with West Nile virus do not get sick. About one in five people who are infected will develop symptoms such as fever, headache, body aches, vomiting, diarrhea or rash and recover after a few days to several weeks. However, the elderly and individuals with suppressed immune systems are at increased risk for more serious, and potentially life threatening illness.

West Nile virus is passed primarily between birds by mosquitoes. Humans, horses and other animals can become infected with WNV if bitten by an infected mosquito. Human-to-human transmission of WNV does not occur.

In response, the Mosquito and Vector Management District of Santa Barbara County is investigating the circumstances of the detections and will be increasing mosquito detection surveys and mosquito larval reduction in the detection areas. The dead bird WNV detection program usually is shut down over the winter, but because of these late detections, the mosquito district will continue to investigate dead bird reports in Santa Barbara County.

The public is advised to take the following precautions to reduce the risk mosquito-borne disease transmission: Avoid outdoor activity when mosquitoes are most active, especially at dusk and dawn. When outdoors, wear long pants and long sleeved shirts and use mosquito repellants. Ensure that door and window screens are tight-fitting and in good repair. Eliminate standing and stagnant water to prevent mosquito breeding. Vaccinations are available for horses from your veterinarian.

The Mosquito and Vector Management District is a public agency charged with protecting the public's health from disease transmission by mosquitoes, rodents, and other nuisance insects. The district works in the unincorporated areas of Santa Barbara County, in the cities of Goleta, Santa Barbara and Carpinteria, and in other specifically assessed areas.

More information about West Nile virus is available at www.westnile.ca.gov. Dead or sick birds can be reported to the West Nile Virus Dead Bird Hotline at 1-877-968-2473.

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