



MOSQUITO AND VECTOR MANAGEMENT DISTRICT OF SANTA BARBARA COUNTY

ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT OF HUMAN DISEASE VECTORS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

West Nile Virus Detected in Santa Ynez

SUMMERLAND, California, October 22, 2014. A Western Scrub Jay collected in Santa Ynez has tested positive for West Nile virus (WNV) infection. An alert local citizen reported the dead bird to the West Nile Virus Hotline. This is the only WNV detection in Santa Barbara County this year. No human WNV cases have been reported in Santa Barbara County this year. West Nile virus has been detected in Santa Barbara County in previous years. This year has been a record year for WNV detections in other counties of California.

"This is a particularly late detection that reminds us that mosquitoes and West Nile virus are still active despite the drought and cooler weather." said Kenneth Learned, vector biologist for the Mosquito and Vector Management District of Santa Barbara County. The Mosquito District routinely looks for West Nile virus in adult mosquitoes, in the District's sentinel chicken flocks, and in dead birds.

Most people who get infected with West Nile virus do not get sick. Some people will have only mild symptoms, such as fever, headache and body aches 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.

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.

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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