



HEALTH SERVICES AGENCY

830 Scenic Drive, P.O. Box 3271, Modesto, CA 95353
Fax: (209) 558-8320
www.hsahealth.org

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East Side MAD: Lloyd Douglass
PHONE: (209) 522-4098
Turlock MAD: David Heft
PHONE: (209) 634-1234

First 2014 Detections of West Nile Virus in Stanislaus County

Stanislaus County – East Side and Turlock Mosquito Abatement Districts have announced the detection of multiple dead birds and mosquitoes that have tested positive for West Nile Virus (WNV) in Stanislaus County. The East Side Mosquito Abatement District has had one pool of mosquitoes (Valley Home) and four dead birds (Modesto) test positive for the presence of WNV; while the Turlock Mosquito Abatement District has had two pools of mosquitoes (Hughson, Turlock) and one bird (Turlock) test positive. These findings represent the first detection of WNV activity in the county this year – activity that is much earlier and higher than usual. As of June 13, 2014, WNV has been detected in 18 California counties. A total of 169 dead birds, 85 mosquito samples, and 1 sentinel chicken flock have been reported with WNV from those counties in California.

“This early detection of so much West Nile virus activity, not only in Stanislaus County, but the State in general, has us concerned”, said David Heft, General Manager of the Turlock Mosquito Abatement District.

“Scientists have shown that warm spring temperatures have a high correlation with high West Nile activity later in the summer months, and I believe we may be seeing just that. Our hope is to raise public awareness regarding this heightened disease potential so that individuals may take necessary precautions to protect themselves and their families,” warned Heft.

As the Fourth of July approaches, both East Side and Turlock Mosquito Abatement Districts encourage the citizens of Stanislaus County to continue their efforts with WNV prevention. People can also use these simple steps to help people protect themselves and others from mosquito bites and WNV:

- Eliminate sources of standing water. During warm weather, mosquitoes can breed within four days. Change the water in pet dishes and regularly replace water in birdbaths. Drill holes in tire swings so water can drain.
- Avoid spending time outside when mosquitoes are most active, at dawn and dusk, and especially for the first two hours after sunset.
- When outdoors, wear long pants, long-sleeved shirts and other protective clothing.
- Exclude mosquitoes from your home with tight fitting screens on doors and windows.
- Apply insect repellent containing the active ingredient DEET when outdoors, according to label instructions.
- In addition to DEET-based products, the CDC also recommends insect repellants containing oil of lemon eucalyptus and Picaridin.

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According to officials, reporting and testing of dead birds is an important step in preventing West Nile Virus. A confirmed case of the virus in dead birds or mosquito samples helps to identify areas that need treatment to reduce mosquito activity. To report a dead bird, call the California State hotline at 1-877-WNV-BIRD or report it online at www.westnile.ca.gov. Birds of particular interest to the State are crows, ravens, magpies, jays and raptors (hawk or eagle).

To report mosquito-breeding problem areas, Stanislaus County residents should contact one of the two mosquito abatement districts that serve the county. For Stanislaus County addresses north of the Tuolumne River, residents should call the Eastside Mosquito Abatement District at (209) 522-4098 (www.eastsidemosquito.com) and all others should contact the Turlock Mosquito Abatement District at (209) 634-1234 (turlockmosquito.org).

For more information, call the West Nile virus hotline at (209) 558-8425 to hear recorded information in both English and Spanish. You can also visit www.stanemergency.com for WNV information.

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