

11 human cases of West Nile Virus in Butte County

County warns residents to take precautions

By Paradise Post Staff

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The statewide trend of increased cases of West Nile Virus includes Butte County, where 11 people have been confirmed to have contracted the virus, according to the Butte County Mosquito and Vector Control District.

The District announced on Monday that it received confirmation that an increasing number of mosquito pools (34), dead birds (18), and (33) sentinel chickens tested positive for WNV.

With increasing mosquito populations and the detection and wide-spread distribution of WNV within Butte County, the District said Monday it was urging residents to take all precautions necessary to drain any and all un-needed standing water, report any suspected mosquito breeding sites to the District, and to protect themselves from the bites of mosquitoes.

WNV has been identified in Butte County every year since its arrival in 2004.

Since 2004, 139 residents have been infected with the virus, which has killed seven.

The District has located the mosquito transmitted disease in Chico, Hamilton City, Paradise, Oroville, Palermo, Honcut, Biggs, Gridley, Richvale, Nelson, and rural areas along the west side of Butte.

Residents should use mosquito repellent when they go outdoors and/or wear long sleeves and long pants especially at the times when mosquitoes are most active (mornings and evenings).

The virus is usually prevalent from May through October when mosquitoes are most abundant. Mosquitoes contract the virus when they feed on infected birds, then spread the virus when the mosquitoes seek other hosts.

In addition to birds and humans, horses are also affected by WNV. Due to the high mortality rate of horses that contract the disease, owners are encouraged to make sure their horses are kept current with their WNV vaccinations.

Individuals can reduce the risk of mosquito-borne disease by following these prevention tips:

- Avoid spending time outside when mosquitoes are active, especially at dusk and dawn

- If you must be outdoors when mosquitoes are active, wear long pants, and long-sleeved shirts
- Before going outdoors, apply insect repellent containing DEET, Picaridin, IR3535 or a repellent oil
- Make sure that doors and windows have tight fitting screens. Repair or replace screens
- Eliminate all standing water on your property that can support mosquito breeding
- Report standing water to Butte County Mosquito and Vector Control District
- Contact Butte County Mosquito and Vector Control District if there is a significant mosquito population

The public is encouraged to become part of the state's monitoring effort for WNV by reporting any dead birds that may have been dead for less than 48 hours. Please call 1-877-968-2473 to report dead birds that may be accepted for testing, or visit the California Department of Public Health's (CDPH) website, www.westnile.ca.gov. Individuals should take note of the location and condition of the bird before calling for further instructions. While there is no evidence that people can get the virus from handling live or dead birds, individuals should not attempt to catch or handle the birds.

The District requests any and all assistance by area residents to report any suspected mosquito-breeding sites and/or any mosquito activity. Reports can be made by phone at 530-533-6038 or 530-342-7350 or website at www.BCMVCD.com.

For more information call the Butte County Mosquito and Vector Control District at 530-533-6038 or 530-342-7350.