

14 human cases of West Nile Virus in Butte County, surpasses total for all of last year

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Butte County already has more confirmed human cases of West Nile Virus this year than for all of 2012. The Butte County Public Health department released new figures Wednesday, showing there have been 14 confirmed human cases.

According to the state California West Nile Virus website, only Los Angeles County has more human cases of West Nile Virus than Butte County.

"The increase in human cases is very concerning as WNV activity typically continues through October. With at least another month to go and especially with this warm weather, Butte County residents are strongly encouraged to protect themselves from mosquito bites," said Dr. Mark Lundberg, Butte County Health Officer.

Although most people with WNV have no signs or symptoms it can be very devastating for others. Since 2004 when WNV was first identified in Butte County, 7 people have lost their lives due to the illness. Fortunately no deaths have occurred this year, but 6 of the 14 confirmed cases have been hospitalized with Neuroinvasive Disease, the most severe form of the virus. Two cases this year have involved children and one case is a person in their early 20's; the remaining cases are in adults, predominantly persons 50 and older. The majority of cases have occurred in persons who reside in the lower elevation areas, including in and around Chico, Biggs/Gridley, Durham, and Oroville.

In Butte County as of September 10, 2013, 42 dead birds, 29 mosquito pools, and 50 sentinel chickens have tested positive for WNV. Due to the increased activity, Butte County residents are at elevated risk for WNV. The Butte County Mosquito and Vector Control District urges residents to take all precautions necessary to drain any and all unneeded standing water and to report any suspected mosquito-breeding sites to Butte County Vector Control. Reports can be made by phone at (530) 533-6038 or (530) 342-7350 or on-line at www.BCMVCD.com