

Glenn County confirms West Nile virus death

16 cases reported in Butte County

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WILLOWS >> A Glenn County resident died because of West Nile virus, according to health officials. It is the only death reported in the county this year.

It was not immediately known when the person died.

Amy Travis, Glenn County Public Health public information officer, said there are six other West Nile virus cases in Glenn County.

There were a total of nine human cases in Glenn County in 2013.

The current cases are primarily in the northern part of Glenn County, she said.

Sutter, Shasta and Sacramento counties have reported recent West Nile virus-caused deaths, according to California's West Nile virus website.

Travis said she could not release details of the Glenn County victim, but emphasized that often times the people who have other illnesses or are elderly are the populations most vulnerable.

Most people who are bit by West Nile-carrying mosquitoes have no symptoms, she said. Only 1 percent will develop a serious illness.

In Butte County, there are 16 confirmed cases of West Nile virus, but there's at least one case pending confirmation, Butte County Health Officer Dr. Mark Lundberg said Friday. No deaths have been reported.

For the most recent confirmed case, the person's onset of symptoms was on Aug. 23, he said. Lundberg believes there are cases out in the county who have not been confirmed.

Six of the people infected with the mosquito-borne virus are from Chico, which has the most cases.

The virus has also been identified in Hamilton City, Paradise, Oroville, Palermo, Honcut, Biggs, Gridley, Richvale, Nelson, and rural areas along the west side of Butte County, according to a previous Enterprise-Record article.

The age of the people who have West Nile virus in Butte County ranges from 25 to 80, Lundberg said.

There were a total of 24 cases last year in Butte County. The virus, which is deadly to horses and in rare cases can be very serious for humans, was first discovered in Butte County in 2004.

Travis said the number of cases in Glenn County are similar to those seen the last couple of years.

Statewide, however, the state is reporting that there have been 181 cases so far in 2014, compared to 101 total cases in 2013.

People are reminded to apply insect repellent with DEET and to avoid going out at dusk and dawn.

The best method to West Nile virus is prevention, Travis said.

Lundberg said people should wear repellent prior to seeing a mosquito, especially since the West Nile virus-carrying mosquito is typically a more mild mannered and stealthy kind.

People are also encouraged to eliminate sources of water where mosquitoes might breed.

For more information on the West Nile virus, go to westnile.ca.gov.

Contact reporter Almendra Carpizo at 896-7760.