

More signs of West Nile in county

Staff Reports (ChicoER.com)

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OROVILLE — There have been more indications that West Nile virus is present in Butte County, according to officials.

Recently, a mosquito pool from the Nelson/Richvale area tested positive for the virus, a news release from the Butte County Mosquito and Vector Control District cited.

A mosquito pool is a group of between 10 and 50 mosquitoes that staff from the district have caught in traps. At least one of the trapped mosquitoes must have the virus for the pool to be declared "positive." The district sends its mosquito pools to UC Davis for testing.

So far in the county, the district has detected the virus in two dead birds and a squirrel, in addition to the mosquito pool.

As a result of the mosquito pool testing positive, the district on Tuesday sprayed a pesticide in several areas including Nelson, Richvale, west Thermalito, East Biggs and Biggs.

There have been no cases of West Nile in people or horses in Butte County so far this year.

According to a website from the state Department of Public Health and other agencies, there have been eight human cases around the state so far. West Nile has been found in 22 California counties this year. The website is <http://westnile.ca.gov>.

Officials recommend avoiding mosquito bites by using an effective repellent and wearing long pants and long-sleeved shirts, especially in the evenings and early mornings.

Most people who become infected with West Nile experience no symptoms or very mild ones, but a relatively small number of people become very ill and can even die.

At this point in the season, "it's really important for the public to take precautions," said Matt Ball, the district's manager.