

Two Butte County residents first West Nile virus cases in state

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Two Butte County residents are the first confirmed human cases of West Nile virus in California this year, according to a press release from the Butte County Public Health Department.

Like 80 percent of people infected with West Nile virus, they didn't have symptoms of the disease, but rather it was discovered when blood they had donated was screened.

The two are unrelated to each other, but no other information was released about them.

As of Wednesday, West Nile virus had been located in 31 of California's 58 counties, with 152 non-human cases.

In Butte County one dead bird and 15 groups of mosquitoes have been found in locations from Chico to Honcut. The virus is transferred to humans by mosquito bites.

"This is a timely reminder that we must do our best to prevent mosquito bites and protect ourselves and our families from WNV," said Butte County Health Officer Dr. Mark Lundberg in the press release. "The public should take extra precautions to avoid mosquitos."

Residents are advised to practice the "Three Ds":

1. DEET >> Use a proven insect repellent like DEET. Other recommended repellents include: picaradin, lemon eucalyptus oil, para-menthane-diol, or IR3535. Follow label instructions.
2. DAWN AND DUSK >> Mosquitoes bite in the early morning and evening. Wear proper clothing and repellent if outside during these times. Make sure that doors and windows have tight-fitting screens to keep mosquitoes out.
3. DRAIN >> Mosquitoes lay their eggs on standing water. Eliminate all sources of standing water on your property, including flower pots, old car tires, rain gutters and pet bowls. For standing water, fountains, ponds, etc., consider adding "mosquito dunks" or mosquito fish. Report unmaintained swimming pools to the Mosquito and Vector Control District at 342-7350 or 533-6038.