

West Nile virus death reported in Tehama County

By Chip Thompson

Red Bluff Daily News

Posted: 09/10/2014 04:51:13 PM PDT

RED BLUFF >> An older Tehama County resident has succumbed to complications of West Nile virus after being bitten by an infected mosquito, according to a press release issued Wednesday morning by Tehama County Public Health.

"This unfortunate death reminds us of the potential danger from mosquito bites and West Nile virus," said Dr. Richard Wickenheiser, Tehama County health officer. "We extend our condolences to the family."

Statewide, the instances of infected mosquitoes is at an all time high, according to Dr. Ron Chapman, director of the California Department of Public Health.

West Nile Virus is a potentially serious disease that is spread to humans and horses by mosquitoes. Those most at risk are older than 50 or have chronic medical conditions, but the department has seen severe complications in healthy patients in their 20s, 30s and 40s, the release said.

People have died from the disease in Glenn, Shasta and Sutter counties this year. At least 10 are dead statewide.

There have been 16 human cases in Butte County and eight in Glenn, according to the state Department of Public Health's West Nile website, <http://westnile.ca.gov>.

West Nile has been detected in 37 California counties with 238 human cases reported to CDPH, a significant increase compared to the 101 cases reported by this time last year.

The best defense against West Nile is to avoid mosquito bites by using insect repellents that contain DEET, remaining inside at dawn and dusk when mosquitoes are most active, making sure you have tight seals on doors and windows to keep mosquitoes out of your home and drain standing water around your home to eliminate breeding grounds for mosquitoes.

Symptoms of West Nile typically appear within 3 days to two weeks and can include fever, head and body aches, diarrhea and vomiting. Only about 20 percent of infections produce symptoms.

Mosquitoes contract West Nile from infected birds. If you see a dead bird, do not pick it up. Instead, report it to 1-877-968-2473 or online at www.westnile.ca.gov/report_wnv.php.

West Nile first appeared in California in 2003, when there were three human cases reported and no fatalities. In 2013 there were 379 cases with 15 fatalities.