

West Nile virus detected in Butte County

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West Nile virus is back in Butte County. A dead robin found in northeast Chico has tested positive with the virus, according to the Butte County Mosquito and Vector Control District.

While it's the first detection of West Nile in Butte County this year, 20 other California counties have reported the virus, at a rate higher than last year. No human cases have been reported in California yet, according to the state Public Health Department's West Nile website, <http://westnile.ca.gov>.

The district urges residents to protect themselves from the mosquito bites that spread the virus, and take steps to eliminate standing water where mosquitoes breed. Suspected mosquito-breeding sites can be reported to the district by phone at 533-6038 or 342-7350 or online at www.BCMVCD.com.

West Nile virus has been found in Butte County every year since its arrival in 2004. Since then, 208 county residents have been identified as being infected with the virus, and eight have died.

To reduce risk of mosquito-borne disease:

- Avoid spending time outside when mosquitoes are active, especially at dusk and dawn.
- If you must be outdoors when mosquitoes are active, wear long pants and long-sleeved shirts, socks and shoes.
- Before going outdoors, apply insect repellent containing DEET, Picaridin, IR3535 or oil of lemon eucalyptus.
- Make sure that doors and windows have tight-fitting screens. Repair or replace screens with holes.
- Eliminate all standing water on your property that can support mosquito breeding.

The public can report birds that may have been dead for less than 48 hours to the state by calling 1-877-968-2473 or going to www.westnile.ca.gov.