



Butte County Mosquito and Vector Control District

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For Immediate Release

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Subject: Dead Bird Hotline Re-opens For Mosquito Season

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Contact at 530-533-6038 and/or 530-342-7350

The Butte County Mosquito and Vector Control District (District) is once again asking residents to assist in the monitoring for West Nile virus (WNV) in the community. Beginning on March 15th, the California Department of Public Health will again be testing dead birds in an effort to confirm the ongoing presence of WNV and to determine how the virus is affecting the bird population in the community.

Residents who find a dead bird are urged to call the WNV phone line at 1-877-968-BIRD (2473). The phone line is available seven days a week from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM. In addition to calling the phone line, the public can also report dead birds 24 hours a day online at www.westnile.ca.gov or by visiting www.bcmvcd.com. Residents should only report birds that have been dead less than 48 hours and do not handle dead birds with bare hands. If a bird is not able to be tested, dispose of it. Use a shovel to put the bird into a plastic bag, put the bag in the trash and wash your hands.

“The public’s help is an important part of the overall success of the WNV surveillance program,” said Matt Ball, manager of BCMVCD. Additionally Ball said “Finding the virus in birds indicates that WNV may be present in the local mosquito population and that people should take precautions to avoid mosquito bites. Butte County residents need to be informed of WNV activity so that they can take steps to avoid being bitten by infected mosquitoes. Such steps could include wearing long sleeved shirts, long pants, and wearing repellents and removing any standing water from their property.”

WNV is spread to people by the bite of a mosquito infected with the virus. Mosquitoes get infected with WNV by feeding on infected birds and can then transmit the virus to other animals, birds, and humans.

Preventing mosquito bites will prevent WNV infection. Since all mosquitoes need water to lay eggs and complete their life cycle, reducing or eliminating standing water reduces potential breeding sites,

mosquito populations and the risk to mosquito bites. Below are measures to help decrease exposure to mosquitoes:

- Avoid being outside in the early morning and early evening when mosquitoes are most active, particularly after dusk when mosquitoes bite the most.
- Cover up! When mosquitoes are present, wear long-sleeved shirts, long pants, shoes and socks to prevent mosquito bites.
- When outside and mosquitoes are present, use insect repellent with DEET, Picaridin, lemon eucalyptus oil, or IR3535 on exposed skin. Follow the label directions.
- Keep mosquitoes outside. Make sure windows and doors in houses have tight fitting screens to keep mosquitoes outside.
- Remove standing water every three to five days. Empty bird baths, flower pots, buckets, pet dishes, tires, wading pools, wheelbarrows, and other containers where mosquitoes can lay eggs.
- Keep swimming pools, hot tubs, and outdoor spas clean and chlorinated. The mosquitoes from one stagnant pool can affect an entire neighborhood.
- Clean clogged roof gutters often. Leaf matter and debris from surrounding trees plug up the drains and can lead to the production of thousands of mosquitoes each season.
- Remind or help neighbors to eliminate breeding sites from their property.
- Call your local mosquito and vector control district office if you see a significant mosquito problem or a stagnant water problem. Ask about the availability of free mosquitofish for ornamental ponds, un-maintained swimming and/or other stagnant water sources that cannot be cleaned immediately.

For more information contact Public Information Officer Doug Weseman or District Manager Matt Ball at 530-533-6038 and/or 530-342-7350