



Butte County Mosquito and Vector Control District

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For Immediate Release

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Subject: **West Nile Virus Increases and Is Spreading Across Butte County**

Contact: Public Information Officer Doug Weseman or District Manager Matthew Ball
Contact at 530-533-6038 and/or 530-342-7350

Butte County Mosquito and Vector Control District (District) received confirmation today that three more mosquito pools have tested positive for West Nile virus. This brings the total number of mosquito pools testing positive for the virus to **nine**. The highest number of positive mosquito pools for any prior year in Butte County was five. The three WNV positive pools were all from the Honcut area (4 in total were submitted). Mosquito pools are live caught mosquitoes, sorted, grouped into allotments (not exceeding 50 specimens), identified to species, and tested for the presence of vector-borne disease. During the past three weeks the District has also found six other positive mosquito pools, one positive sentinel chicken, and two dead birds. With increasing mosquito populations and the detection and wide-spread distribution of WNV within Butte County and Hamilton City, the District urges residents to take all precautions necessary to drain any and all un-needed standing water, report any suspected mosquito-breeding sites to the District, and to protect themselves from the bites of mosquitoes.

Statewide WNV activity is much higher this year than in 2011 (see chart right). Matthew Ball, District Manager for the Butte County Mosquito and Vector Control District stated, "It's imperative that county residents be aware that WNV is active and to avoid mosquito bites by whatever means necessary. Residents are urged to do their part to prevent mosquitoes from breeding by inspecting and eliminating all standing water from their properties." WNV has been identified in Butte County every year since its arrival in 2004. Since 2004, 93 residents have been infected with the virus, 7 of which have lost their lives due to the disease.

As of August 10th, 2012

	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>
Counties	19	32
Human cases	10	18
Horses	1	4
Dead birds	152	648
Mosquito samples	609	1136
Sentinel chickens	47	75
Squirrels	1	2
2011 YTD - Year to date corresponds to the same time last year.		

Source: <http://www.westnile.ca.gov/>

The District has now identified WNV activity in Hamilton City, Richvale, Palermo, Oroville, Biggs, south Chico, west Chico, and Honcut. The District's Public Information Officer, Doug Weseman states that "with WNV being reported and identified by neighboring counties and the wide-spread distribution locally, it's crucial that residents protect themselves from mosquito bites. Residents should wear long sleeves and pants and use mosquito repellents when they go outdoors, especially at the times when mosquitoes are most active (mornings and evenings). WNV is preventable, you only need to prevent the mosquito bite!" The virus is usually prevalent from May through October

when mosquitoes are most abundant. Mosquitoes contract the virus when they feed on infected birds, then spread the virus when the mosquitoes seek other hosts to bite.

In addition to birds and humans, horses are also affected by WNV. Due to the high mortality rate of horses that contract the disease, owners are encouraged to make sure their horses are kept current with their WNV vaccinations.

Individuals can reduce their risk of mosquito-borne disease by following these prevention tips:

- 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 according to label instructions
- Make sure that doors and windows have tight fitting screens. Repair or replace screens that have tears or holes
- Eliminate all standing water on your property that can support mosquito-breeding
- Report standing water to Butte County Mosquito and Vector Control District
- Contact Butte County Mosquito and Vector Control District if there is a significant mosquito problem where you live, work, and/or play

The public is encouraged to become part of the state's monitoring effort for WNV by reporting any dead birds that may have been dead for less than 48 hours. Please call 1-877-968-2473 to report dead birds that may be accepted for testing, or visit the CDHS website, www.westnile.ca.gov. Individuals should take note of the location and condition of the bird before calling for further instructions. While there is no evidence that people can get the virus from handling live or dead birds, individuals should not attempt to catch or handle the birds.

The public is also encouraged to report any suspected mosquito-breeding sites and/or any mosquito activity. Reports can be made by phone at 530-533-6038 or 530-342-7350 or website at www.BCMVCD.com.

For more information call the Butte County Mosquito and Vector Control District at 530-533-6038 or 530-342-7350 or by visiting www.BCMVCD.com.