



July 22, 2013

NEWS RELEASE

Contact: Dottie Merki, Program Chief
(951) 358-5172

State confirms mosquitos, birds in mid-county test positive for West Nile virus

The state has confirmed that mosquitos collected from several locations in the Nuevo area, and two locations in San Jacinto, tested positive for West Nile virus.

The Riverside County Department of Environmental Health received confirmation on the tests from UC Davis that mosquitos collected in Nuevo and two locations in the city of San Jacinto tested positive. The samples were collected on July 16 from locations at the Nuevo Fire Station; near the San Jacinto River, north and south of Ramona Expressway; and the Eastern Municipal Water District wetlands and district ponds in San Jacinto.

The department also received confirmation last week that a dead crow in the city of Banning and a sentinel chicken at the San Jacinto Wildlife Area both tested positive for West Nile virus antibodies. Certain species of birds, such as crows and raptors, seem more susceptible to the virus while others such as chickens, sparrows and finches react with antibodies without showing physical signs of infection. Last month mosquitos collected from Moreno Valley and Nuevo also tested positive for the virus.

It is not unusual for mosquitos and birds in parts of Riverside County to test positive for the virus, especially during the summer. In 2012, 133 mosquito samples and 63 sentinel chickens tested positive for the virus.

The virus can be transmitted to humans and some animals through the bite of an infected mosquito. Most individuals who are infected will not experience any illness. Others will have only mild symptoms, such as fever, headache and body aches. However, young children, the elderly or individuals with lowered immune systems are at greater risk of more severe symptoms. Anyone with symptoms should contact their health care provider.

The Department's vector-control staff has intensified mosquito surveillance, as well efforts to control adult and larval mosquitos in these areas to reduce the mosquito populations and interrupt the disease transmission cycle. Residents are encouraged to take an active role to reduce the threat of West Nile virus in their neighborhoods.



COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

Steve Van Stockum, Director

- Protect yourself against mosquito bites by using insect repellent. Use a repellent with DEET (N, N-diethyl-m-toluamide), picaridin (KBR 3023), oil of lemon eucalyptus [p-methane 3, 8-diol (PMD)] or IR3535 according to the instructions on the product label. DEET products should not be used on infants under two months of age and should be used in concentrations of 30 percent or less on older children. Lemon eucalyptus oil should not be used on children under three years of age.
- Be aware of peak mosquito hours. Dawn and dusk are peak biting times for many mosquitoes. Consider rescheduling outdoor activities during that time.
- Clothing can help reduce mosquito bites. Wear long-sleeves, long pants, and socks when outdoors to help keep mosquitoes away from skin.
- Mosquito-proof your home. Drain standing water because mosquitos lay their eggs in standing water. Limit the number of places for mosquitoes to breed by draining/discarding items that hold water. Check rain gutters and drains. Empty unused flowerpots and wading pools. Change water in birdbaths and pet bowls at least weekly.
- Keep mosquitoes outside by having tightly fitting screens on all windows and doors.

In California, the virus has been detected in 30 counties in 2013, including, one human case, one horse fatality, 228 dead birds, 555 mosquito samples, 27 sentinel chickens and four squirrels. Contact the Riverside County Vector Control program at (951) 766-9454 or your local vector-control district to report mosquito problems, request mosquito fish and report neglected pools or standing water as potential mosquito sources. Visit the department online at www.rivcoeh.org to obtain more information.