



Public Health Mōno-Gram

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Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.



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For Immediate Release

West Nile Virus (WNV) Infects Mosquitoes in Crowley Lake area

The Mono County Health Department was informed late yesterday that a mosquito pool collected in South County has tested positive for West Nile Virus infection. The mosquito pool was collected on August 20th from a trap behind the County Maintenance yard off South Landing Road.

Steve Ganong from the Mammoth Lakes Mosquito Abatement District had been contracted by the Hilton Creek Community Services District to do mosquito trapping and surveillance in the Hilton Creek District. Steve, along with Tim Howard from the California Department of Public Health, had submitted 4 mosquito pools for testing, one of which was positive. The positive pool contained 18 *Culex tarsalis* mosquitoes, which is the most efficient vector for viral disease including West Nile virus.

As a result of this information, an appropriate response is being discussed with all officials, including Mono County Health Department, Mono County Environmental Health Division, Hilton Creek Community Services District, Mammoth Lakes Mosquito Abatement District, and California Department of Public Health. Any action plan will be presented and discussed with the public in the affected area.

This is the first positive confirmation of the presence of the virus in Mono County this year. Relatively little is known about the presence of the virus in the mosquito populations in Mono County. However, this finding is considered unusual, especially considering the relatively quiet year of WNV activity in the rest of the state and country. So far this year, only 3 dead birds have been reported to the state from Mono County, one of which was tested and was negative for the West Nile virus. Mosquito trapping in Old Mammoth have not resulted in enough mosquitoes being trapped to submit for testing, probably as a result of successful mosquito abatement activities by Steve Ganong.

Across the state, 12 human cases of WNV have been identified, with no fatalities. At this time last year, 73 human cases had been identified. The presence of West Nile virus activity in humans, horses, dead birds, tree squirrels, mosquito pools, or sentinel chickens has been reported in 35 counties – now 36 including Mono County.

Nationwide, as of August 18th, 82 human cases had been reported from 20 states, with 3 fatalities reported, from Mississippi and Texas.

Residents and visitors are urged to be diligent in protecting themselves and family members from mosquito bites. Most individuals who are infected with WNV will not experience any illness. Recent data indicate that those with diabetes and/or hypertension are at greatest risk for serious illness. The most effective ways for individuals to prevent WNV are:

Educate your friends and family about WNV prevention -- avoiding mosquito bites:

- Eliminate standing water on your property, as this is where mosquitoes breed.
- Make sure that door and window screens are installed and in good condition.
- When outdoors, use an insect repellent containing DEET, picaridin, oil of lemon eucalyptus, or IR3535.
- Avoid being outdoors during dusk and dawn and wear long sleeves and long pants while outdoors.

For more information about WNV and to report dead birds, visit www.westnile.ca.gov or call toll-free 1-877-WNV-BIRD. For local information, please call the Mono County Health Department at (760) 924-1830.