



# News Release

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## **WEST NILE VIRUS SEASON OFFICIAL: DEAD BIRD TESTS POSITIVE FOR WEST NILE VIRUS IN CONTRA COSTA COUNTY**

*--District reports first West Nile virus positive bird in 2009; urges public to report all dead birds--*

**CONCORD, CALIFORNIA** - - A dead Western scrub jay found in Alamo has tested positive for West Nile virus, the first positive dead bird documented in Contra Costa County this year. The bird was reported on June 28 and confirmed positive on July 8. Earlier this year, eleven mosquito samples tested positive for the virus, but the bird confirmed positive this week is the first evidence of West Nile virus transmission in the county this season.

This dead bird is nature's way of reminding us that West Nile virus should be taken seriously," said Deborah Bass, spokeswoman for the District. "We all need to take the usual, but very important precautions of wearing mosquito repellent when outdoors and making sure we are not producing mosquitoes in our own yards."

Dead bird reports help to pinpoint West Nile virus activity and allow vector control employees to concentrate their surveillance and control efforts in those areas. Residents are urged to report all dead birds to the West Nile virus hotline at 877-WNV-BIRD (877-968-2473) or online at [www.westnile.ca.gov](http://www.westnile.ca.gov) Not all birds can be picked up for testing, but the reports remain crucial to mosquito control efforts.

Most people who are bitten by a mosquito with WNV will not get sick; however, up to 20 percent of the population infected with WNV will get West Nile fever. West Nile fever causes people to experience mild to severe flu-like symptoms such as fever, headache, body ache and possible paralysis. Less than one percent of infected individuals will require hospitalization. The elderly and those with compromised immune systems are most susceptible to illness and death caused by WNV.

Residents are urged to take the following precautions:

- **DEFEND** yourself against mosquitoes by using a repellent with an effective active ingredient such as DEET, Picaridin or Oil of Lemon Eucalyptus. Make sure to follow label directions.
- **DRAIN** all sources of standing water that may support mosquito-breeding habitats. Residential sources can be a big producer of mosquitoes in Contra Costa County.
- **DOOR** and window screens should fit tight and be in good repair. This will prevent mosquitoes from entering your home.

- DO vaccinate your horses. Horses are highly susceptible to West Nile virus – approximately half of the horses that get WNV die or have to be euthanized.
- DAWN and DUSK are times to avoid being outdoor since this is when mosquitoes are most active.
- DRESS appropriately by wearing long sleeves and pants when outdoors and mosquitoes are present.
- DEAD birds should be reported to 877-WNV-BIRD (877-968-2473) or online at [www.westnile.ca.gov](http://www.westnile.ca.gov). Not all birds will be picked up and tested, but reporting dead birds provides important information for mosquito control efforts.

People wishing to be notified about adult mosquito fogging or spraying in residential areas have several options. They may visit the District's Web site at [www.ccmvcd.dst.ca.us](http://www.ccmvcd.dst.ca.us) and opt to receive the notifications automatically by email; they can view information on the District's Web site; or they may phone the District for a recorded message at (925) 771-6195.

Contra Costa Mosquito & Vector Control District is located at 155 Mason Circle in Concord. Call the District to report mosquito problems at (925) 771-6195, or visit their office between 8:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. to get FREE mosquitofish for ornamental ponds or horse troughs.

For information concerning human West Nile virus symptoms, prevention, or testing, please call the Contra Costa Health Services department at (888) 959-9911 or visit their website at [www.ccpublichealth.org](http://www.ccpublichealth.org)

For information concerning West Nile virus and horses, please visit the California Department of Food and Agriculture Animal Health Branch at [www.cdffa.ca.gov/ahfss/ah/wnv\\_info.htm](http://www.cdffa.ca.gov/ahfss/ah/wnv_info.htm) or call them at (916) 654-1447.

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