



Merced County Mosquito Abatement District
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FIRST HUMAN CASE CONFIRMED OF WEST NILE VIRUS REPORTED IN MERCED COUNTY

Merced County – Merced County Department of Public Health officials notified Merced County Mosquito Abatement District (District) that a citizen in the city of Livingston contracted West Nile Virus (WNV). This is the first human case of WNV in the County this year. In addition to the human case, the District has detected WNV in nineteen (19) sentinel chicken, and six (6) mosquito pooled samples to date in Merced County. As of July 28, 2023, three (3) human cases have been confirmed in California.

West Nile Virus is transmitted through the bite of an infected mosquito. County residents are encouraged to continue their efforts to reduce mosquito breeding and WNV prevention by taking the following steps:

- Eliminate sources of standing water where mosquitoes lay their eggs.
- Avoid spending time outside when mosquitoes are most active (dawn and dusk).
- Apply insect repellent containing the active ingredient DEET when outdoors, according to label instructions. In addition to DEET-based products, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) also recommends insect repellent containing oil of lemon eucalyptus and Picaridin.

The District has been busy locating mosquito breeding sources and treating them by ground or aerial spray equipment as necessary. The District continues to be concerned with neglected swimming pools where WNV-carrying mosquitoes prefer to lay their eggs in urban areas. Public health safety is the District's main concern with regard to mosquito control. "This year's first human case is a month earlier than the first human case last year," states General Manager, Rhiannon Jones. "The wetter winter, the triple digit temperatures in July, and the increase in mosquito populations in Merced County are contributing factors to earlier than normal virus activity."

According to officials, reporting and testing dead birds is another important step in preventing WNV. WNV is initially brought into the area by infected birds. A confirmed case of the virus in dead birds or mosquito samples helps to identify areas that require treatment to reduce mosquito activity. To report a dead bird, call the California State Hotline at 1-877-WNV-BIRD or report it online at www.westnile.gov.

To report mosquito breeding problem areas, Merced County residents should contact Merced County Mosquito Abatement District at (209) 722-1527 or visit www.mcmosquito.org. Anonymous reports are welcome.

For inquires regarding WNV and human infections, residents should contact Merced County Department of Public Health at (209) 381-1200.

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