



County of Santa Cruz

HEALTH SERVICES AGENCY

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DISEASE CONTROL UNIT

PUBLIC HEALTH ALERT

August 6, 2008

Communicable Disease:	West Nile Virus
Principal Investigator:	Poki Namkung, MD, MPH, Health Officer
Date:	August 6, 2008
Press Release #:	WNV1

West Nile Virus (WNV) has been detected for the first time in 2008 in 1 bird, a house finch, from Santa Cruz County.

INCIDENT

- The positive bird was found in Scotts Valley, and submitted for testing on July 29, 2008.
- The discovery of a positive bird arrives 3 weeks later than in the previous season. There has been WNV activity in many counties in the state.
- As of today, there have been no human cases in Santa Cruz County.

ACTIONS

- Mosquito and Vector Control technicians have been sent to the site to target mosquito-breeding sources in the area.
- Public Health is coordinating activities with the California State Department of Public Health and the Mosquito Abatement Program throughout the county.
- Health care providers in the county have knowledge of specific information on signs and symptoms of West Nile Virus and have been performing testing as appropriate.

INFORMATION

- There is no evidence of horses, tree squirrels or birds transmitting WNV directly to humans.
- WNV is transmitted to humans and animals by mosquitoes and is not transmitted by casual person-to-person contact. Rarely, it has been transmitted via blood transfusions or organ transplants.
- New blood bank procedures now screen for WNV.
- Horses can become ill from WNV but cats and dogs seem to be resistant to WNV.
- There is a vaccine available for horses that has proven over time to be safe and effective. There is no vaccine as yet for humans.
- You may report a dead bird or dead tree squirrel by calling 1-877-968-BIRD (2473) or by visiting <http://www.westnile.ca.gov>.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- The best way to protect yourself from WNV is to prevent exposure to mosquitoes.

- **Drain** all standing water at least once a week to prevent mosquitoes from breeding. Be sure to check rain gutters, plants, buckets, pool and spa covers, birdbaths and any other items in your yard that may contain standing water.
- **Dress** in long sleeves and long pants when outdoors.
- Avoid going outside at **dusk and dawn** when mosquitoes are most active.
- Use mosquito repellent that contains **DEET** or picaridin on exposed skin when you go outside. You may also spray clothing with repellents that contain DEET or permethrin. Do not spray repellent on skin under clothing. Do not use permethrin directly on skin. Repellents are safe and effective when used according to the directions on the package. Be sure to read and follow the manufacturer's **DIRECTION FOR USE**, especially when using on children.
- Make sure window screens are in good repair to prevent mosquitoes from entering the home.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

For more information on West Nile Virus:

<http://www.santacruzhealth.org/fightthebite/index.htm>

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

Santa Cruz County Mosquito and Vector Control District (831) 454-2590

Health Alert: conveys the highest level of importance; warrants immediate action or attention.

Health Advisory: provides important information for a specific incident or situation; may not require immediate action.

Health Update: provides updated information regarding an incident or situation; unlikely to require immediate action.