



County of Santa Cruz

HEALTH SERVICES AGENCY

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DISEASE CONTROL UNIT

PUBLIC HEALTH ALERT

August 30, 2006

Communicable Disease:	West Nile Virus
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Press Release #:	WNV2

West Nile Virus (WNV) has been detected in a Steller's Jay collected August 16th and a Goldfinch collected August 17th from Santa Cruz County.

INCIDENT

- The positive birds were found in Scotts Valley and Aptos.
- Detection of the virus in birds means that West Nile Virus is likely present throughout the county and we may see human cases in the next few weeks.

ACTIONS

- Mosquito and Vector Control technicians have been sent to the 2 sites to target mosquito-breeding sources in the area.
- Public Health is coordinating activities with the California Department of Health and the County Mosquito and Vector Control Program.
- A Public Health Alert was sent today to health care providers in the county with specific information on signs and symptoms of West Nile Virus.
- A Public Health education campaign was started at the beginning of the mosquito season, including reports in local papers, TV reports, and outreach to senior centers and long-term care facilities.

INFORMATION

- There is no evidence of 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.
- Blood bank procedures 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.

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, PICARIDIN or lemon eucalyptus oil** 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, visit www.cdc.gov or www.santacruzhealth.org

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.