



Press Release

MOSQUITO and VECTOR MANAGEMENT DISTRICT
of SANTA BARBARA COUNTY

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TWO MORE DEAD BIRDS FROM SANTA YNEZ & MONTECITO TEST POSITIVE FOR WEST NILE VIRUS

Two more dead wild birds, a Scrub Jay collected in Santa Ynez on August 17, 2006 and a Crow collected in Montecito on August 18, 2006, have tested positive for West Nile Virus (WNV). These are the second and third dead birds from Santa Barbara County to test positive for the disease in 2006. WNV has also been detected in a dead bird from Carpinteria on July 31, 2006 and in live mosquitoes from the UCSB West Campus, Goleta Valley on August 4, 2006. The dead birds were collected by private citizens who reported them to the California Department of Health Services' toll free West Nile Virus Dead Bird Hotline (listed below).

Ventura County has reported one confirmed human case of WNV and a total of 29 WNV positive dead wild birds in 2006 to date. San Luis Obispo County has reported 1 confirmed human case and 3 confirmed horse cases of WNV, along with a total of 6 WNV positive dead wild birds in 2006 to date. **This indicates that WNV is widespread throughout the entire region.** Mosquitoes and mosquito-borne diseases do not respect political boundaries or property lines and mosquitoes and birds occur in all areas of Santa Barbara County. In 2005, WNV was detected in many parts of Santa Barbara County. See below for the full list of precautions that individuals should take.

West Nile Virus is a mosquito-transmitted virus passed primarily between birds by mosquitoes. Humans, horses, and other animals can become infected with WNV if bitten by an infected mosquito. Although most people exhibit no symptoms, the elderly and individuals with suppressed immune systems are at greatest risk for more serious, and potentially life threatening illness.

In California, for 2006 to date, West Nile Virus has been detected in 50 of the 58 counties. In California during 2005, there were 880 confirmed human cases (19 fatal) of WNV including 2 in Santa Barbara County along with 456 horse cases (200 fatal) including 6 in Santa Barbara County (3 fatal). Typically, infection in wild birds precedes infections in humans by only a few weeks. It is therefore critical that residents take precautions **now** to protect themselves from mosquito bites and take measures to eliminate mosquito breeding around their homes:

- Avoid outdoor activity when mosquitoes are most active – from dusk until dawn.
- If outdoors, wear protective clothing and apply mosquito repellants according to label directions – those containing DEET, Picaridin, or Oil of Lemon Eucalyptus have been proven to be the most effective.
- Ensure that door and window screens are secured and in good repair to prevent mosquito entrance into homes.
- Eliminate standing and stagnant water. Eggs are laid and immature mosquitoes develop in dirty pools & spas, ponds, bird baths, buckets, barrels, children's toys etc. Immature mosquitoes become biting adults in 5-7 days.
- Free mosquito-eating fish are available to South County residents for permanent water sources (ponds, troughs, large fountains) at the Mosquito and Vector Management District of Santa Barbara County.
- Horse owners should contact their veterinarian to have their horses vaccinated for West Nile Virus and to keep the vaccinations up to date.
- Contact the Mosquito and Vector Management District of Santa Barbara County immediately at (805) 969-5050 to report mosquito problems or green pools/spas.

Dead birds serve as early warning sentinels that the virus is being transmitted. Residents are urged to assist our District and the State by reporting dead bird sightings to the WNV hotline by calling **1-877-WNV-BIRD (877-968-2473)** or online at **www.westnile.ca.gov**. Additional information or requests for service can be obtained from the Mosquito and Vector Management District of Santa Barbara County at www.sbcvcd.org or **(805) 969-5050**. The Mosquito and Vector Management District will accept reports of standing water and possible mosquito breeding sources in Santa Barbara County.