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First Signs of West Nile Virus Activity in Yolo County

(Elk Grove, CA) - The Sacramento-Yolo Mosquito & Vector Control District, in partnership with the County of Yolo, announced today that the first signs of West Nile virus (WNV) activity have been detected in Yolo County. A House Finch, found dead near Jack Slaven Park in southeast Woodland, tested positive for the virus. Concurrently, WNV activity is gradually increasing in Sacramento County, with more mosquito samples and dead birds testing positive today.

"As the weather gets warmer, WNV activity will steadily increase," said Gary Goodman, District Manager. "This is a cause for concern, especially with summer around the corner and the hottest months of the year approaching, when activity typically intensifies." Earlier this week, the first mosquito sample and several dead birds tested positive in the area of South Land Park in Sacramento. "We urge residents to continue taking proper precautions to protect themselves from mosquitoes," Goodman added.

In response to these findings, the District will continue to monitor West Nile virus activity through widespread mosquito trapping and testing. Ground treatments will be performed as necessary to quickly reduce mosquito populations and protect public health.

West Nile virus is primarily transmitted through the bite of infected mosquitoes, which acquire the virus from infected birds. Symptoms usually develop within a week after being bit by an infected mosquito. Symptoms of West Nile virus may include fever, nausea, headaches, and muscle aches, lasting from a few days to several weeks. While most infected individuals have no symptoms, severe complications such as meningitis, encephalitis, paralysis, or even death can occur, particularly in those over 60 years old or with compromised immune systems.

"The report of a dead bird testing positive for West Nile virus means it is time for residents to begin protecting themselves from mosquitoes," said Yolo County's Public Health Officer, Dr. Aimee Sisson. "Last year, multiple Yolo County residents died from West Nile Virus infection. Take the time to protect yourself against mosquito bites—it just might save your life."

There is no specific treatment or vaccine for West Nile virus. Therefore, adopting preventive measures remains crucial in minimizing the risk of contracting the virus. To reduce the risk of West Nile virus infection, Yolo County Public Health and Sacramento-Yolo Mosquito and Vector Control District recommend following the 7 D's to reduce mosquito exposure:

- **DRAIN** any stagnant water to eliminate mosquito breeding sites.
- **DAWN** and **DUSK**, when mosquitoes are most active, are times to limit outdoor activities.
- **DRESS** in long sleeves and pants when outdoors.

- **DEFEND** against mosquitoes by using effective insect repellents containing DEET, Picaridin, or Oil of Lemon Eucalyptus.
- Ensure **DOORS** and windows screens are intact to prevent mosquitoes from entering homes.
- For assistance, contact the **DISTRICT** at 1-800-429-1022 to address mosquito concerns.

Mosquito activity is expected to increase throughout the summer, and next week has been declared National Mosquito Awareness Week by the American Mosquito Control Association (AMCA), an international organization of nearly 2,000 public health professionals dedicated to preserving public health and well-being through safe, environmentally sound mosquito control programs since 1935. For current information about National Mosquito Awareness Week as well as District activities, please visit www.FIGHTtheBITE.net.

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2024 West Nile virus activity update:

Sacramento County: 8 dead birds and 2 mosquito samples have tested positive for West Nile virus to date.

Yolo County: 1 dead bird has tested positive for West Nile virus.