



Mono County Health and Human Services

West Nile Positive Bird from Chalfant

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The Mono County Health Department has been informed today that an American Crow has tested positive for West Nile Virus infection. The bird was reported to the West Nile Hotline and picked up in the Chalfant Valley on 8/17/06, and the lab test was reported as positive today.

For the last several years, the presence of the virus has been demonstrated in Inyo, Mono, and Alpine Counties through the testing of mosquitoes, chickens, horses, and birds. This year, positive birds and mosquitoes have been identified only in Inyo County up until now, as this is the first bird to test positive in Mono County. Several weeks ago, Mono County Health Department reported the first ever human case of West Nile Virus from the north county. Conditions which cause high risk for humans are high concentrations of the right kinds of mosquitoes, along with high numbers of the right kinds of birds, all living in close proximity with high numbers of humans. Given our unique geography, distinct microclimates, and low human population density, the risk to humans is considered low. However, we are still in a very active mosquito season in many areas.

After the bite of an infected mosquito, humans may become sick after 2 to 14 days. However, 80% of individuals who become infected do not develop any symptoms. Those that do may develop rash, fever, muscle aches, weakness, headache, or swollen lymph glands. Older individuals, and those with underlying medical conditions such as high blood pressure and diabetes, are more vulnerable. They get more severe illness, and take a longer time to recover. There is no specific treatment except general supportive care.

This year has been relatively quiet, as far as West Nile Virus infections go, throughout the United States. In California, there have been 117 human cases reported from 49 counties, with two deaths. There have been 25 cases in horses. This is significantly less than at the same time last year.

To protect yourself and your family and neighbors, remember to:

1. clear your property of any standing water, such as in old tires, bird baths, livestock feeding troughs, and pools
2. wear long sleeves and long pants in mosquito prone areas
3. use mosquito repellent according to the instructions
4. avoid outdoor activities at dawn and dusk when mosquitoes are most active
5. repair window screens that provide entry points

6. make sure that your horses are currently vaccinated
7. report dead birds to the hot line at 1-877-WNV-BIRD, seven days a week.



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