News Release: West Nile Virus Detected in Reedley

Steve Mulligan, District Manager of the Consolidated Mosquito Abatement District (District), reports that a sample of mosquitoes collected from the City of Reedley has tested positive for West Nile virus (WN). Although this is the first indication of WN activity from Reedley in 2011, there have been a total of 39 WN positive mosquito samples collected in Fresno County to date this year. Recently a Santa Barbara County man was the first confirmed human case of WN in California in 2011, and to date, there have been no confirmed human cases in Fresno County. Last year there were 131 confirmed human WN infections in the State, with 6 related fatalities, and in Fresno County 28 people were infected (five with asymptomatic infections), with one fatality. Eighteen counties in California have reported WN infected humans, birds or mosquitoes this year.

With the warm temperatures of summer, the District has noticed an increase in the numbers of mosquitoes, especially in some areas of our cities and other residential areas. In order to reduce the threat from mosquitoes and from West Nile virus, the District urges community help and support in eliminating mosquito production around homes, businesses and farms, especially from backyard sources.

Because immature mosquitoes live and develop in water, any container that holds water is a potential mosquito producing source. Common mosquito sources include buckets, barrels, pots, wheelbarrows, tires, water troughs, wading pools, water features, ornamental ponds and unmaintained swimming pools. Backyard sources are not readily accessible to mosquito control workers, yet can produce significant numbers of mosquitoes that can bite residents and potentially transmit WN. Diligence and a minimum of effort on the part of the public are necessary to protect the community by preventing the occurrence of mosquitoes. Residents can help eliminate mosquitoes by dumping and draining containers that hold water around homes, farms or places of business. Report unmaintained or “green” swimming pools, which are a major source of mosquitoes in residential areas. Farmers should not allow irrigation water to stand in fields for more than three days to prevent mosquito production.

The District has been making treatments of registered insecticides to control mosquitoes in areas in and around the City of Reedley and throughout the District, and will continue these operations during the mosquito season. These treatments may include the spraying of an aerosol insecticide fog at night in residential areas to control adult mosquitoes.

People can contact the Consolidated Mosquito Abatement District in Selma if they have a mosquito problem, to report an unmaintained swimming pool or water feature, or if they need assistance in eliminating mosquito sources from around their premises. The District will provide mosquitofish for swimming pools, backyard ponds or horse troughs free of charge. The telephone numbers are 559-896-1085 or 1-800-821-1577.

West Nile virus is a disease spread by mosquitoes that become infected when they feed on birds that carry the virus. The virus can then be transmitted to humans and other animals through the bite of an infected mosquito. Most people who are infected with WN will not experience any illness. Approximately 20% of infected individuals will have only mild to moderate symptoms, such as fever, headache and body aches. Less than 1% of individuals will develop serious neurologic illnesses such as encephalitis or meningitis. The elderly and those with compromised immune systems, diabetes, or hypertension are more susceptible to serious illness.
Since WN is once again present in our area, it is important that people take precautions to protect themselves from mosquito bites. Make sure that doors and windows have tight-fitting screens to keep out mosquitoes. The types of mosquitoes that can carry the virus are most active throughout evening and night, from dusk until dawn. People should avoid spending time outside when mosquitoes are active, especially the first two hours after sunset. Anyone outside during these times should wear loose fitting long sleeve shirts and long pants and apply insect repellent to exposed skin. Effective repellents are those containing the active ingredients DEET, picaridin, oil of lemon eucalyptus, or IR 3535, as recommended by the U. S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Always read and follow label instructions carefully.

While there is no vaccine to protect people against WN, vaccines are available for horses. Horse owners are advised to contact their veterinarian for guidance. Dead or ill birds may indicate WN, so report any such birds to the WN Dead Bird Program at 1-877-968-2473. Information about West Nile virus can be obtained at [www.westnile.ca.gov](http://www.westnile.ca.gov). For mosquito problems call the Consolidated Mosquito Abatement District at (559) 896-1085 or 1-800-821-1577.