

****PRESS RELEASE****



Contact Information:
Conlin Reis, Manager
Fresno Westside Mosquito
Abatement District
Firebaugh, CA
(559) 659-2437
creis@fresnowestmosquito.com
www.fresnowestmosquito.com

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FIRST DETECTION OF WEST NILE VIRUS IN WESTERN FRESNO COUNTY FOR THE 2020 SEASON

FIREBAUGH, CALIFORNIA - The Fresno Westside Mosquito Abatement District is asking residents to take precautions to protect themselves from mosquito bites and prevent mosquito production after the first detection of West Nile virus in mosquito samples this season. Mosquitoes trapped in the area north of the community of Tranquility tested positive for West Nile virus late last week. This detection follows several West Nile virus positive mosquito samples and dead birds in the City of Fresno. Statewide in 2020, a total of 135 mosquito samples have tested positive for West Nile virus and another 52 mosquito samples have tested positive for St. Louis encephalitis virus. Both of these viruses are transmitted by mosquitoes of *Culex* genus, which can develop in a wide variety of urban and rural standing water sources.

“While this summer has thus far been relatively mild for disease activity in our area, residents should still take precautions to reduce the nuisance and disease risk posed by mosquitoes,” says Conlin Reis, District Manager of the Fresno Westside Mosquito Abatement District.

“Eliminating sources of standing water around the home and wearing EPA-approved mosquito repellents during periods of peak activity, particularly dawn and dusk, will go a long way toward keeping mosquitoes from ruining your summer plans.”

To reduce the risk of being bitten by mosquitoes and exposed to mosquito-borne viruses including SLEV or WNV, residents are urged to take the following precautions:

- Drain all sources of standing water around your home. Remove unnecessary objects from around your home that can potentially hold water.
- Report observed sources of standing water (i.e. unmaintained swimming pools) and mosquito activity to the Fresno Westside Mosquito Abatement District (559) 659-2437 or at www.fresnowestmosquito.com.
- Irrigation water on farms and other lands should not be allowed to stand for more than four days.
- Report dead birds to 877-WNV-BIRD (877-968-2473) or www.westnile.ca.gov.
- Repair window and door screens to prevent mosquitoes from entering buildings.
- Wear long sleeves and pants if outdoors when mosquitoes are present.

- Use a repellent containing DEET, oil of lemon eucalyptus, picaridin or IR3535, as recommended by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Always read and follow the repellent label instructions.
- Avoid outdoor activity during dawn and dusk when *Culex* mosquitoes are most active.
- Stock mosquitofish in domestic water features, such as backyard ponds and horse troughs. The District will stock mosquitofish, at no cost, in water sources where they are likely to be effective.

For more information on St Louis encephalitis virus:

California Department of Public Health:

<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/HealthInfo/discond/Documents/StLouisEncephalitisFactSheet.pdf>

Center for Disease Control:

<https://www.cdc.gov/sle/>

For more information on West Nile virus:

California Department of Public Health

<http://westnile.ca.gov/>

Center for Disease Control:

<https://www.cdc.gov/westnile/index.html>