



MOSQUITO ABATEMENT DISTRICT

**Merced County Mosquito Abatement District**

3478 Beachwood Drive, P.O. Box 909, Merced CA 95341

Phone: (209) 722-1527

Toll: (800) 622-3242

Fax: (209) 722-3051

[www.mcmosquito.org](http://www.mcmosquito.org)

Date: June 5, 2017

NUMBER: 17-01

FOR RELEASE: Immediate

## First 2017 Detection of West Nile Virus in Merced County

**Merced County** – Merced County Mosquito Abatement District announced that one mosquito sample tested positive for West Nile Virus (WNV) from the rural area outside of the City of Los Banos on June 2, 2017. This is the first detection of WNV activity in the county this year. As of June 2<sup>nd</sup>, WNV has been detected in 11 California counties with the WNV activity confirmed in 11 dead birds, 29 mosquito samples, no horses, and one human case (located in Kings County).

“This year is going to be a challenging year for mosquito control in Merced County,” says Rhiannon Jones, General Manager of the Merced County Mosquito Abatement District. “We have thousands of acres flooded along river corridors in the county and due to heavy snow pack earlier this year, we will continue to see lots of water channeling through the county wetlands.”

It is anticipated that there will be higher populations of mosquitoes due to increased water in the County. In turn, it could greatly increase the transmission of West Nile virus later in the summer months in 2017. In 2016, there were no WNV human cases in Merced County. In California, there were 483 human cases of the disease resulting in 19 fatalities according to CDPH in 2016.

Residents are urged to continue to report dead birds to the WNV State Hotline: 1-877-968-2473. Reports may also be made online at [www.westnile.ca.gov](http://www.westnile.ca.gov). Dead bird reports are an important tool for West Nile Virus detection, even if the bird is not picked up and tested. Lack of dead bird reports decreases the ability to detect higher risk locations.

To date, the type of mosquitoes that can carry Zika virus have **NOT** been detected in Merced County. “There are no locally mosquito transmitted cases of Zika, Dengue or Chikungunya virus in California. We are actively trapping for the invasive species of mosquitoes that carry these diseases,” states Rhiannon Jones, Merced County Mosquito Abatement. “West Nile Virus, however, is in Merced County and we urge people to take precautions to prevent mosquito bites.” Merced County Mosquito Abatement District is requesting residents to report any day time biting mosquito in urban locations to aid in invasive species detection.

Merced County Mosquito Abatement District encourages the citizens of to continue their efforts with WNV prevention. People can also use these simple steps to help people protect themselves and others from mosquito bites and WNV:

-CONTINUED-

- **Dump** or **drain** standing water. Mosquitoes prefer to lay eggs in stagnant water.
  - **Defend** yourself against mosquitoes using repellents containing DEET, Picaridin, or Oil of Lemon Eucalyptus.
  - Avoid being outdoors when mosquitoes are present, typically **Dawn** and **Dusk**.
  - **Report neglected swimming pools** by calling your local mosquito abatement district.
- Anonymous calls accepted.*

To report mosquito-breeding problem areas, Merced County residents should contact Merced County Mosquito Abatement District at (209) 722-1527 [main], (800) 622-3242 [toll], or [www.mcmosquito.org](http://www.mcmosquito.org).

For more information, visit the California Department of Public Health website (<http://www.westnile.ca.gov/>) for WNV information.

The Merced County Mosquito Abatement District will host a booth at the Merced County Fair. The district encourages citizens to visit the booth, meet their mosquito control technicians, as well as learn steps they can take to protect themselves against mosquito bites and West Nile virus.

###END###