



**MERCED
COUNTY
MOSQUITO
ABATEMENT
DISTRICT**

Merced County Mosquito Abatement District
3478 Beachwood Drive, Merced, CA 95341
Phone: (209) 722-1527
www.mcmosquito.org

NUMBER: 26-01

FOR RELEASE: Immediate

Date: July 6, 2026

FIRST 2026 DETECTION OF WEST NILE VIRUS IN MERCED COUNTY

MERCED, CA- The Merced County Mosquito Abatement District has confirmed the first detection of West Nile virus (WNV) activity in Merced County for 2026. A mosquito sample collected in the city of Planada tested positive for WNV through laboratory testing conducted by the Center for Vector-Borne Diseases at UC Davis.

As of July 6, 2026, WNV activity has been detected in 24 California counties, with 261 positive mosquito samples, 133 dead birds, and 1 human case reported statewide.

West Nile virus is spread through the bite of an infected mosquito and can cause serious illness. The detection of WNV in Merced County means the virus is now active in our local environment, making mosquito prevention and personal protection important for everyone.

The District encourages residents to follow the monthly Skeeter Meter, a local risk awareness tool developed in partnership with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The Skeeter Meter uses local mosquito surveillance data to show current West Nile virus risk levels in Merced County.

“West Nile virus is here, and we need the public to take it seriously,” said Rhiannon Jones, Executive Director of the Merced County Mosquito Abatement District. *“The best protection is staying aware of local risk levels, wearing repellent, and eliminating standing water around your house.”*

How Residents Can Help:

- **Dump and Drain:** Remove standing water weekly from flowerpot saucers, buckets, birdbaths, pet bowls, and other containers. Dispose of unused containers that may collect water.
- **Maintain Pools:** Drain or treat unmaintained swimming pools. The District can help at no cost.
- **Manage Water in Fields:** Do not allow water to stand in pastures or agricultural fields for more than three days. If needed, contact the District for assistance.
- **Protect Yourself:** Wear EPA-registered repellent containing 30% DEET, Picaridin, or Oil of Lemon Eucalyptus.
- **Stay Informed:** Check the monthly Skeeter Meter and take extra precautions when risk levels increase.

The District continues to expand its mosquito surveillance and control efforts across Merced County. This year, the District hired additional mosquito control technicians to better serve the growing needs of the county. Residents should expect to see District staff monitoring mosquito traps, conducting inspections, and treating mosquitoes using backpack sprayers, truck foggers, and aircraft throughout mosquito season.

Stay informed about mosquito treatments and West Nile virus risk by following the Merced County Mosquito Abatement District on Facebook, Instagram, and Nextdoor, or by visiting mcmosquito.org.

Residents can report unmaintained swimming pools, standing water, or high mosquito activity at mcmosquito.org or by calling (209) 722-1527. Anonymous reports are accepted, and all District services are provided free of charge.

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

###END###