

MEDIA ALERT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
July 23, 2007

MAILING ADDRESS

SACRAMENTO COUNTY
8631 BOND ROAD
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YOLO COUNTY

1234 FORTNA AVENUE
WOODLAND, CA 95695

1.800.429.1022
FIGHTtheBITE.net

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MOSQUITO CONTROL MOVES TO LEVEL 3, WEST NILE VIRUS ACTIVITY ALERT
-- 4 Sentinel Chickens Test Positive For West Nile Virus

ELK GROVE, Calif. – The Sacramento-Yolo Mosquito and Vector Control District received preliminary confirmation today that four sentinel chickens located in Sacramento County have tested positive for West Nile virus (WNV). Sentinel chickens are strategically placed in areas of high mosquito activity throughout Sacramento and Yolo counties. When an infected mosquito bites a sentinel, the chicken will not become ill. Instead, it will develop antibodies toward the virus. The detection of antibodies in chickens allow the District to track and monitor virus activity in the immediate area where the sentinels reside. The District routinely collects and tests blood samples from the sentinels year round. Typically, the chickens are sampled every week during the mosquito season (May through October) and once a month during the off season (November through April).

“The recent detection of West Nile virus-positive sentinel chickens increases exponentially the risk of virus transmission to animals and ultimately humans,” said District Manager David Brown. “We strongly urge our community to protect itself by practicing the District’s 7Ds of mosquito prevention,” Brown said.

In response to the preliminary West Nile virus-positive sentinel chickens, the District will continue to implement its Mosquito-Borne Disease Management plan to protect public health and welfare. This plan may include ground and/or aerial treatments in and around the area where virus has been detected. The District will also make every attempt to notify individuals who sign-up for the District’s notification list via e-mail. However, the District may not be able to notify the public if immediate applications are needed to protect public health and welfare from serious diseases such as West Nile virus. The District may also cancel a scheduled operation due to weather and/or other reasons without prior notice. For a list of where West Nile virus activity has been detected in Sacramento and Yolo counties or for treatment updates please visit the District online at FIGHTtheBITE.net and click on 2007 West Nile virus Activity.

7Ds of mosquito prevention: **DRAIN** any standing water that may produce mosquitoes. **DAWN** and **DUSK** are times to avoid being outdoors. These are the times when mosquitoes are most active. **DRESS** appropriately by wearing long sleeves and pants when outside. **DEFEND** yourself against mosquitoes by using an effective insect repellent, such as DEET, Picaridin or Oil of Lemon Eucalyptus. Make sure you follow label directions! **DOOR** and window screens should be in good working condition. This will prevent mosquitoes from entering your home. **DISTRICT** personnel are also available to address any mosquito problem you may be experiencing by calling 1-800-429-1022 or visiting the District online at FIGHTtheBITE.net.

DAVID BROWN, MANAGER

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West Nile virus

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), West Nile virus (WNV) is the leading cause of arboviral encephalitis in the United States. Originally discovered in Africa in 1937, WNV was first detected in the western hemisphere in 1999 in New York City. Since then it has caused seasonal epidemics of West Nile virus fever and severe neurological disease. West Nile virus is transmitted to humans and animals through the bite of an infected mosquito. Mosquitoes become infected with WNV when they feed on infected birds.

2007 West Nile virus activity update

Level 3 – Sacramento County: 13 birds, **4 sentinel chickens**, 0 horses, 19 mosquito samples and 0 humans have tested positive for West Nile virus to date.

Yolo County: 4 birds, 0 sentinel chickens, 0 horses, 1 mosquito sample and 0 humans have tested positive for West Nile virus to date.

2006 West Nile virus activity

Sacramento County: 16 humans, 1 horse, 89 dead birds, 36 mosquito samples and 13 sentinel chickens tested positive for West Nile virus in 2006

Yolo County: 27 humans, 0 horses, 54 dead birds, 62 mosquito samples and 26 sentinel chickens tested positive for West Nile virus in 2006

To **report a dead bird or squirrel** call 1-877-WNV-BIRD (1-877-968-2473) or visit the California Department of Public Health online at westnile.ca.gov

The **Sacramento-Yolo Mosquito and Vector Control District** provides mosquito and vector control services for Sacramento and Yolo counties.

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