

West Nile virus confirmed in Butte County

By [STAFF REPORTS](#) | ChicoER.com

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West Nile virus has made it back into Butte County.

Groups of mosquitoes, known as “mosquito pools,” have tested positive for the disease in the areas of Honcut, Palermo, and Dayton, according to the Butte County Mosquito and Vector Control District.

The mosquito-borne disease can have serious effects on humans, including death. Since the disease first made it to Butte County in 2004, 232 people have been infected and eight have died.

With the disease present and mosquito populations increasing, the district urges residents to drain all unneeded standing water, report possible mosquito-breeding sites, and protect themselves from being bitten.

Mosquitoes contract the virus when they feed on infected birds, then spread the virus when they seek other hosts to bite.

Most people who are infected show no symptoms. About 1 in 5 develop a fever with other symptoms such as headache, body aches, joint pains, vomiting, diarrhea, or rash. Recovery can take months.

More serious neurologic illness such as encephalitis or meningitis occur in less than 1 percent of people who are infected, and can prove fatal.

Horses are also affected by the disease, with a much higher mortality rate. A vaccine is available to protect horses, and owners are encouraged to keep their horses current.

West Nile virus season typically runs into October.

The district says people can reduce their risk of mosquito-borne disease by:

Avoid spending time outside when mosquitoes are active, especially at dusk and dawn.

Wear long pants, long-sleeved shirts, and socks and shoes

Use insect repellent containing DEET, Picaridin, IR3535 or oil of lemon eucalyptus according to label instructions

Make sure that doors and windows have tight fitting screens in good repair.

Residents should contact Butte County Mosquito and Vector Control District if they encounter a significant mosquito problem, or to report suspected mosquito breeding sites.

Reports can be made by phone at 533-6038 or 342-7350, or at www.ButteMosquito.com.

The public is encouraged to become part of the state's monitoring effort by reporting any birds that may have been dead for less than 48 hours by calling 1-877-968-2473 or going to the California Department of Public Health website, www.westnile.ca.gov. The disease has been detected in 21 California counties so far this year, with 10 human cases.