



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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WARNING ISSUED FOR RURAL AREAS CONTAINING TICKS **County Environmental Health Officials Encourage Residents To Take Precautions**

Recent laboratory tests conducted by County of San Diego Department of Environmental Health officials have confirmed tularemia in a second wild rabbit found in the North County. Tularemia, or rabbit fever, is caused by the bacterium *Francisella tularensis* that is normally found in wild rabbits. It can be transmitted to humans by various species of ticks, as well as by biting flies such as deer and horse flies, and other arthropods. Tularemia cannot be directly transmitted from person to person.

The two infected wild rabbits were found in a hilly area northwest of Camino Del Norte and east of Rancho Santa Fe Road in Encinitas. Ticks have also tested positive for tularemia in this area and County Vector Surveillance and Control staff have posted warning signs to alert people to the danger of contracting tularemia from the insects.

Symptoms of the disease may include a sudden fever, an ulcer at the site of the bite and swollen, painful lymph nodes. Anyone who has been exposed to tularemia or develops these symptoms should contact a health care professional immediately.

People working or visiting areas containing ticks should wear light-colored clothing. (Doing so allows ticks to be easily seen before they attach to the skin.) Wear long pants and a long-sleeved shirt. Tuck your shirt into your pants and your pants into boots or socks. Apply insect repellent to clothing and footwear, and when doing so follow product label directions. When hiking, use marked trails, avoid brush and periodically check yourself and others for ticks. Dogs should be kept on leashes and also checked for ticks.

For more information, visit the County of San Diego Department of Environmental Health website at (www.sandiegobugs.org), the Center for Disease Control website (www.cdc.gov/health/tularemia.htm) or call the Department of Environmental Health at (858) 694-2888.