



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE PUBLICATION
Sept. 30, 2008

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HUMAN, BIRD, HORSE CASES OF WEST NILE VIRUS HIT RECORD *Public Urged to Take Steps to Protect Against Contracting WNV*

Cases of West Nile virus in humans, birds and horses have surpassed previous totals, setting a record in San Diego County for the disease.

In 2007, there were 15 confirmed human cases of WNV, 118 bird deaths and four positive horses. The total number of human cases this year is now 22. The to-date total for dead birds is now 449, and five horses have tested positive for WNV.

The San Diego County Health and Human Services Agency (HHSA), County Department of Environmental Health Vector Control and County Veterinarian report four new locally-acquired human cases of West Nile virus (WNV), 24 dead birds, two horse deaths, and two positive batches of mosquitoes. **The reporting period is from Sept. 22 to Sept. 28, 2008.**

The new human cases include:

- 35-year-old Oceanside woman diagnosed with meningitis (hospitalized, discharged)
- 45-year-old La Mesa man diagnosed with meningitis (hospitalized, discharged)
- 45-year-old North Park man diagnosed with meningitis (hospitalized, discharged)
- 63-year-old Bay Park man diagnosed with West Nile fever (not hospitalized)

All of the victims are improving.

The mosquitoes and dead birds including 23 American crows and one Western Scrub Jay were found in Alpine, Clairemont, Del Mar, Escondido, Mira Mesa, Oceanside, Pacific Beach, Ramona, Rancho Bernardo, San Marcos, Santee, Sorrento Valley, Torrey Hills, Torrey Pines, Valley Center and Vista.

Two horses diagnosed with WNV have been euthanized. One, from Escondido, was not vaccinated; the other, from Rancho Santa Fe, had not received the full recommended doses of vaccine. County Veterinarian Nikos Gurfield urges horse owners to contact their veterinarian and obtain vaccine for their horses, and follow recommendations from the veterinarian on timing and number of doses needed.

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2008 to-date cases include:

- 22 human cases
 - 21 locally-acquired cases
 - 1 non-locally-acquired case
- 449 dead birds
- 13 positive sentinel chickens
- 4 horse deaths, 1 infected horse
- 34 positive mosquito batches

Wilma Wooten, M.D., M.P.H, County of San Diego Public Health Officer, and Gary Erbeck, Director, County Department of Environmental Health Vector Control, urge the public to take the following steps to protect themselves against WNV:

- Use insect repellent when outdoors, especially at dawn and dusk, when mosquitoes are most active
- Use insect repellent with DEET, Picaridin, oil of lemon eucalyptus, or IR3535
- Do not sleep outside, unprotected, while camping; wear long sleeves and pants
- Ensure screens on windows and doors fit tightly and have no holes or other damage.
- Check your property weekly for mosquito breeding sources; go to www.SDFighttheBite.com for a mosquito prevention checklist
- Report green pools to County Vector Control

Most people infected with WNV do not develop any symptoms or become seriously ill. Nearly one in five who do fall ill may suffer from headache, fever, nausea, fatigue, skin rash or swollen glands. Approximately one in 150 people infected with WNV develop more serious neurological effects such as meningitis, encephalitis or myelitis. If you suspect you have WNV, contact your healthcare provider.

For more information or to report dead birds or green pools, please call the County's WNV information line toll free at (888) 551-INFO (4636).

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