

# More chipmunks on South Shore found to have plague

Two more chipmunks on the South Shore have tested positive for plague. This brings the total number to three this fall.

One of the chipmunks was found in the Tallac Historic Site area and one was near the U.S. Forest Service Taylor Creek Visitor Center.

The chipmunks were tested as part of a surveillance effort initiated by health officials after learning earlier this month that another chipmunk had tested positive for plague at the U.S. Forest Service Visitor Center in the Taylor Creek area.

A total of 41 rodents (38 chipmunks and three squirrels) were tested as part of the most recent surveillance effort. Interim El Dorado County Health Officer Robert Hartmann, in a press release said, the surveillance test results are not unexpected, but do warrant precautions and notification to the public.

Warning signs will continue to be posted in the affected areas and surrounding campgrounds throughout the coming months.

“Risk of transmission is significantly reduced during the winter months because rodents and their fleas are less active when the weather is cold,” Hartmann said.

Plague is an infectious bacterial disease that is spread by squirrels, chipmunks and other wild rodents and their fleas. People can become infected through close contact with infected animals or infected fleas. Plague can be prevented by avoiding contact with these wild rodents and their fleas, and by keeping pets away from wild rodents and their burrows.

To report a sick or dead rodent, contact El Dorado County Vector Control at (530) 573.3197.