

West Nile virus found in El Dorado County bird

A bird found in the El Dorado Hills area tested positive for West Nile virus, the first for 2015.

The bird, a Western Scrub Jay, was found June 16.

So far this year, West Nile virus activity has been reported in 26 California counties, including Sacramento and Placer counties. No human cases of the virus have been reported in California this year.

According to Fred Sanford, supervising environmental health specialist with the El Dorado County Environmental Management Division, it is unusual to see a West Nile positive bird this early in the season.

“We don’t typically get our first report of a West Nile positive bird in El Dorado County until later in the summer,” Sanford said in a press release. “Confirmation of our first West Nile virus positive bird means the virus is circulating between birds and mosquitoes and there is heightened risk of infection in humans. It’s important to take precautions.”

Last year, seven West Nile virus positive birds were identified in El Dorado County. No human cases were reported.

West Nile virus can be transmitted to people through the bite of an infected mosquito. Mosquitoes get the virus when they feed on infected birds. The illness is not spread from person-to-person. While most people infected with the virus show no symptoms, some may have high fever, severe headache, tiredness and/or a stiff neck that can last several days to several weeks.