

Time to worry about mosquitoes

With this being Mosquito Awareness Week, El Dorado County health officials are reminding residents to take steps to protect themselves from mosquitoes as warmer weather approaches.

West Nile virus is primarily a disease of birds that can be transmitted to people and animals by mosquitoes. WNV is a mosquito-borne disease that can result in debilitating cases of meningitis and encephalitis, and death to humans, horses, avian species and other wildlife. In 2017, there were 536 confirmed human cases of WNV in 44 counties throughout California, with no cases in El Dorado County. Statewide there were 43 human deaths.

Pregnant women should be aware about the risks of traveling to Mexico and other countries where the Zika virus can be transmitted through mosquito bite, which can result in harm to the growing fetus.

El Dorado County vector control technicians respond to resident complaints and provide surveillance and control of mosquito sources in designated areas of the county.

Residents and visitors can reduce their risk of mosquito-borne diseases by taking the following precautions:

- Eliminate or drain all sources of standing water around your property including flower pots, old tires, and buckets. Mosquitoes can lay their eggs in sources of water as small as a bottle cap.
- Avoid activity outside when mosquitoes are most active, especially at dawn and the first two hours after sunset.
- If you are being bitten or see any other activity outside these time frames, contact vector control.

- If you are outdoors when mosquitoes are biting, wear long pants and long-sleeved shirts.
- Apply insect repellent containing EPA-registered active ingredients such as DEET, Picaridin, IR3535, or oil of lemon eucalyptus. Always apply according to label instructions.
- Make sure doors and windows have tight-fitted screens. Repair or replace screens that have tears or holes.
- If planning travel out of the country, check with the Centers for Disease Control for current information and advisories related to Zika, yellow fever, and other travel-related risks.

To report a dead bird, call 877.968.2473. To report a complaint about mosquito activity, contact El Dorado County Vector Control at 530.573.3197 in the Tahoe basin, or 530.621.5300 on the West Slope.