

Dead Tahoe bird tests positive for West Nile virus

A Steller's jay in South Lake Tahoe has tested positive for West Nile virus.

This is the first bird this year to test positive in El Dorado County. The animal was found on May 7.

San Mateo and Santa Clara counties have also had reported cases of West Nile.

Confirmation of the West Nile virus positive bird means the virus is circulating between birds and mosquitoes and there is heightened risk of infection in humans.

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. The most serious cases of West Nile virus infection can lead to encephalitis, an inflammation of the brain, which can be fatal.

Last year, two West Nile virus positive birds were identified in El Dorado County; in Garden Valley and South Lake Tahoe. For 2018, no human cases of West Nile virus have been reported for El Dorado County.

To help prevent West Nile virus:

- Drain standing water around property and keep water in swimming pools, ponds and water troughs circulating or treated with "Mosquito Dunks" or mosquito fish.
- Apply insect repellent that contains DEET or another

approved substance (e.g. picaridin, oil of lemon eucalyptus or IR 3535) on exposed skin when outdoors.

- Dress in long sleeves and pants when outdoors among mosquitoes. Mosquitoes are most active at dusk and dawn.
- Make sure doors and windows have tight fitting screens, kept in good condition.
- Report dead birds and tree squirrels to 877.968.2473. Wear gloves and place the dead bird or squirrel in a double plastic bag if you dispose of it yourself.