



**COUNTY OF SAN LUIS OBISPO HEALTH AGENCY
PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**West Nile Virus Detected in Dead Bird in San Luis Obispo County
*Case is First Confirmed Bird Death from West Nile Virus in 2017 in SLO County***

San Luis Obispo — The California Department of Public Health (CDPH) has notified the County of San Luis Obispo Public Health Department that a bird collected on September 18 in Atascadero has tested positive for West Nile virus. The bird represents the first confirmation of West Nile virus activity in San Luis Obispo County for 2017. The bird was a Western Scrub Jay.

In 2017, West Nile virus has been detected in 43 counties in California, with 211 human cases and 8 deaths since the beginning of the year, according to CDPH. Throughout the United States, a total of 1,047 human cases have been reported to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

West Nile virus is commonly transmitted to humans and animals by mosquitoes. While most people infected with West Nile do not experience any symptoms, about one in five experience flu-like symptoms and a small number of people (less than one percent) develop serious neurologic illness. The risk of serious illness is higher for people over 50 years of age and people with certain medical conditions such as diabetes and hypertension. West Nile virus activity typically follows a seasonal pattern based on mosquito populations.

The County of San Luis Obispo Public Health Department reminds residents to limit the spread of West Nile and other mosquito-borne diseases by protecting themselves from mosquito bites and helping eliminate mosquito breeding sites.

"While West Nile virus has become a part of life here in California, it's important to remember that we can take action to keep ourselves and our families safe," said Dr. Penny Borenstein, Health Officer of the County of San Luis Obispo. "Simple, low-tech steps like draining sources of standing water go a long way when it comes to protecting our community from mosquito-borne illnesses."

To prevent mosquito bites, focus on protecting yourself and your home:

- **Apply a repellent** that contains DEET, picaridin, or oil of lemon eucalyptus. (Follow label directions for safety.)
- **Wear protective clothing** such as long-sleeved shirts and pants.
- **Check and repair all screens**, including screen doors, to keep mosquitoes out.

To eliminate mosquito breeding sites around your home, focus on eliminating standing water:

County of San Luis Obispo Health Agency

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- **Find and drain containers that collect water around the yard**, such as empty cans, buckets, flowerpots, old tires, trash cans, swimming pool covers and more.
- **Clear roof gutters** so water can drain properly.
- **Clean and scrub bird baths, fountains, pet dishes, and other water sources** at least once a week.

More information on West Nile virus activity in California is available at www.westnile.ca.gov.

Mosquito prevention tips and resources for San Luis Obispo County—including special recommendations for golf courses, wineries, and other agricultural properties—are available at www.slocounty.ca.gov/mosquito.

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