



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

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**West Nile Virus Detected in Fifth Dead Bird in San Luis Obispo County
Case Represents Unusually High County Total for 2017**

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 November 9 in San Luis Obispo has tested positive for West Nile virus. The bird represents the fifth confirmed case of West Nile virus in birds in San Luis Obispo County in 2017 and the first such case in the city of San Luis Obispo.

In total, five birds have tested positive for West Nile virus in San Luis Obispo County in 2017: two in Atascadero, one in Paso Robles, one in Templeton, and the most recent in San Luis Obispo. This number is higher than in recent years. San Luis Obispo County saw no confirmed cases of West Nile virus in birds in 2016, 2015, or 2014, and one case each in 2013 and 2012.

"While this number is higher than in recent years, it is not surprising following this year's rainy winter," said Dr. Penny Borenstein, Health Officer of the County of San Luis Obispo. "West Nile virus is transmitted by mosquitoes that breed in standing water, and increased rain means an increase in breeding sites. It's important to remember that we can take action to keep ourselves and our community safe, particularly by draining sources of standing water and protecting ourselves from mosquito bites."

In 2017, West Nile virus has been detected in 47 counties in California, with 454 human cases and 25 deaths since the beginning of the year, according to CDPH.

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.

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.)

County of San Luis Obispo Health Agency

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- **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:

- **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. This site also provides forms for reporting a dead bird that may have West Nile virus.

More information on mosquito activity in San Luis Obispo County, including mosquito species trapped at surveillance sites County-wide, is available from an interactive map at <http://bit.ly/slo-mosquito-data>.

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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