

Bird Tests Positive for West Nile Virus in Bend Area

by Bend Weekly News Sources

A bird found in the Bend area has tested positive for West Nile virus, public health officials in Deschutes County and Oregon Department of Human Services (DHS) reported Friday, October 20. "The bird is the first sign of West Nile virus (WNV) in Deschutes County this year," said Emilio DeBess, D.V.M., DHS public health veterinarian. "This is the first indication that West Nile is present in the Bend area," said Muriel DeLaVergne-Brown, Deschutes County Program Manager, "Oregonians need to get in the habit of protecting themselves from mosquito bites, because West Nile virus is here to stay." Deschutes County recommends five key prevention steps: * Screen doors and windows should fit tightly. Repair or replace screens that have tears or holes. * Wear long pants, long-sleeve shirts and other protective clothing when outside. * Eliminate all sources of standing water that can support mosquito breeding such as clogged gutters, birdbaths and old tires. * Avoid playing or working outside at dawn and dusk, when mosquitoes are most active. * Repellent use, preferably one that contains DEET, Picaridin or oil of lemon eucalyptus, is advised. Follow label directions carefully. Never apply DEET directly to children or put it on children's hands. Apply repellent first to your own hands and then onto the child. Do not use oil of lemon eucalyptus on children under age three.

West Nile virus was first reported in Oregon in 2004. So far in 2006, Oregon recorded West Nile virus infections in 64 people, 20 birds and 32 horses and 24 mosquito pools. For more information please visit <http://www.oregon.gov/DHS/ph/acd/diseases/wnile/countymap06.pdf> . DHS has an active surveillance program underway to test birds, chickens and mosquitoes for WNV. In addition, physicians and other health providers are encouraged to test patients who have neurological symptoms compatible with West Nile, according to DeBess. DHS has set up a toll-free West Nile virus hotline for people to call for recorded information in English and Spanish at (866) 703-4636 (statewide). Information, including updated case counts, is also on the DHS Website. Citizens may also call the Deschutes County Health Department for more information at 322-7400.

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