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NEWS

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West Nile Virus Positive Mosquitoes Found in Elmore County

Elmore County – Multiple positive West Nile Virus (WNV) mosquito pools were identified this week in Elmore County. The positive pools were located in the areas of Canyon Creek Street, Hamilton Road, and East 6th Street/South 18th East Street in Mountain Home, Three Island Crossing State Park in Glenns Ferry and King Hill outside of Glenns Ferry. Elmore County is part of the growing list of Idaho counties reporting mosquitoes testing positive for WNV. Twelve Idaho counties, including the neighboring counties of Ada, Owyhee, Gooding and Twin Falls have also reported WNV-positive mosquitoes this season. Just last week, the state's first human case of WNV was reported in a resident from Kootenai County.

The Elmore County Pest Abatement District has been treating the positive mosquito pool areas through fogging. Additional mosquito testing is anticipated early next week.

The discovery of mosquitoes carrying WNV serves as a reminder to the public to protect themselves from mosquitoes and the diseases they can harbor. WNV is usually contracted from the bite of an infected mosquito; it is not spread from person-to-person through casual contact. Symptoms of infection often include fever, headache, body aches, nausea, and sometimes swollen lymph glands, or a skin rash. In some cases, the virus can cause severe illness, especially in people older than 50.

To reduce the likelihood of WNV infection, people are advised to avoid mosquitoes, particularly between dusk and dawn when they are most active. In addition, you should:

- Cover up exposed skin when outdoors and apply DEET or other EPA-approved insect repellent to exposed skin and clothing. Carefully follow instructions on the product label, especially for children.
- Insect-proof your home by repairing or replacing screens.
- Reduce standing water on your property; check and drain toys, trays or pots outdoors that may hold water.
- Change bird baths, static decorative ponds, and animal water tanks weekly because they may provide a suitable mosquito habitat.

WNV does not usually affect domestic animals, but it can cause severe illness in horses and certain species of birds. Although there is no vaccine available for people, there are several vaccines available for horses. People are advised to vaccinate their horses annually.

Last year, nine Idahoans were infected with WNV, including one from Elmore County. In 2006, Idaho led the nation in West Nile Virus infections with almost 1,000 human cases, which contributed to 23 deaths.

For more information on West Nile Virus, visit <http://westnile.idaho.gov>.

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