

# PRESS RELEASE

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## West Nile Virus Infected Mosquitoes Found in Bingham County

Blackfoot, Idaho-- The Bingham County Abatement District's mosquito control program, operated by Vector Disease Control International (VDCI), has detected the first West Nile virus (WNV) positive mosquito pool of 2024 in Bingham County. A total of 62 pools (1,742 total mosquitoes) from Bingham County have been tested so far this year, and all have been negative until now. The pool of mosquitoes that tested positive was collected in the Springfield Area, and VDCI has taken aggressive action to reduce the mosquito population in this affected area by expanding the surveillance and West Nile virus testing, and increasing both larval and adult mosquito control activities.

"*Culex tarsalis* mosquitoes are the primary vector species of West Nile virus in our area and are most common in July and August when the temperatures are warmest," said Justin Huse, Bingham County's mosquito abatement program manager. "The number of *Culex tarsalis* mosquitoes has been high as expected this year, so our detection of West Nile virus was also expected and we are taking immediate action to reduce the population of these mosquitoes." He added, "This early detection of WNV in mosquitoes is one of the primary reasons for our comprehensive mosquito surveillance and control program."

A WNV positive mosquito pool indicates that viral activity is increasing in the environment and people should be more careful and take precautions to protect themselves from the virus. The Bingham County Abatement Board recommends that all Bingham County residents take the following precautions:

- Use insect repellent containing DEET, Picaridin, or Oil of Lemon eucalyptus while always following the label directions for use.
- Wear loose fitting, light colored clothing while outdoors, especially long-sleeved shirts, long pants, shoes and socks.
- Minimize outdoor activity around dusk and dawn, when mosquitoes are most active.
- Make sure that all screens on doors and windows are in good condition and fit tightly.
- Encourage neighbors and family members to exercise precautions as well.
- Eliminate standing water around your property and encourage neighbors to do the same.

- **Do not over-irrigate pastures to the point that water stands for more than five days.**
- Keep grass and weeds cut in order to minimize resting places for adult mosquitoes.

West Nile virus can be transmitted to humans, horses and other animals by infected mosquitoes after the mosquitoes have bitten infected birds, which are the primary hosts of the virus. Most people bitten by West Nile virus-infected mosquitoes experience either no symptoms, or possibly a short period of mild flu-like symptoms. Symptoms of human West Nile virus infections typically begin within 14 days following the insect bite and consist of low-grade fever, muscle and joint aches, fatigue, and headaches. In rare but severe cases, symptoms can include high fever, neck pain, severe headache, a rash on the torso, and disorientation, which may be signs of encephalitis (inflammation of the brain). If such symptoms occur, residents should seek immediate medical attention from a physician. There is no specific treatment for West Nile virus infection; avoiding mosquito bites and a comprehensive integrated mosquito management program is the best prevention.

If you have any mosquito related questions, please contact VDCI at 208-684-5112.

For more information about West Nile virus, visit the following websites:

**West Nile Virus Information**

<http://www.westnile.idaho.gov>

<http://www.vdci.net>

**Southeast District Health Web Page**

<http://www.sdhdidaho.org>

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