

Jefferson County Department of Health and Environment (JCDHE)
West Nile Virus (WNV) and Zoonoses
Newsletter # 6
July 16, 2008

WNV NATIONAL

Outside of Colorado, the July 15th, 2008 update from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and United States Geological Survey (USGS) have posted 28 human cases of WNV with no deaths: 1 from Alabama, 2 from Arkansas, 1 from Arizona, 3 from California, 8 from Mississippi, 2 from Oklahoma, 4 from North Dakota, 1 from South Dakota, 1 from Tennessee, and 5 from Texas.

For updates visit their websites at

<http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/westnile/Mapsactivity/surv&control07Maps.htm>

http://diseasemaps.usgs.gov/wnv_us_human.html

WNV COLORADO

There have been no new confirmed cases of West Nile Virus (WNV) infection in Colorado. The current number of cases stands at two (one each from Boulder and Logan counties). The total number of mosquito pools tested this year (n=621) continues to be substantially lower when compared to numbers tested last year (n=1587) at this time. Additionally, there have been no reports of WNV positive mosquito pools, birds, or horses this year as opposed to last year, during which time 42 mosquito pools, 3 birds, and 1 horse had tested positive by July 11th. Data from sentinel zone-trapping show Culex mosquito population densities are significantly lower this season, by a factor of 100 at some locations, compared to last year. These current trends indicate that the WNV human transmission risk is considerably reduced this year and would indicate a much lower WNV case total than reported in 2007 season (n=576). While the overall risk is currently low, late season spikes in the mosquito population and infection rates could occur, so continued use of personal protective measures is still recommended.

<http://www.cdphe.state.co.us/dc/Zoonosis/wnv/index.html>

WNV JEFFERSON COUNTY

Mosquito Surveillance: The weekly mosquito trapping yielded over 800 mosquitoes and from those mosquitoes 2 pools of Culex mosquitoes were submitted to the CDPHE lab for WNV testing. The highest number of Culex mosquitoes trapped were 157 near Ralston Creek at 72nd and Simms in Arvada and 70 near Prospect Park in Wheat Ridge. All of the pools submitted were negative for WNV.

During the past week there were 522 larval site surveillance and control inspections with 111 of those sites treated with larvicide.

The review of past WNV seasons shows that around 85 percent of people who became ill with West Nile virus were infected during a six-week period from July 1 through the second week of August. Please remember to take precautions and always remember to follow the 4 Ds:

- **Use repellent for ALL outdoor activities. Use DEET, Picaridin or Oil of Lemon Eucalyptus, (according to labeled instructions).**
- At **Dawn** and **Dusk** wear long sleeves and pants when going outdoors.
- **DRAIN** and **EMPTY** all containers in the yard because you can be bitten by WNV carrying mosquitoes from your own yards.
- Check your home to make sure all windows and doors have screens and are in good condition. This will reduce the chance of mosquitoes and bats gaining entry into your home.
- For additional information on repellents and on how to protect you and your family around home go to <http://health.jeffco.us>

Mosquito Complaint Hotline:

Ottertail Environmental operates a toll free telephone line for citizen reports and concerns, that number is 1-888-774-2161 and locally the local number is 303 273-2878.

RABIES IN COLORADO

A raccoon and cat have been reported as positive for rabies. Both animals were submitted from Cheyenne County. This is the first rabid raccoon documented since 1963 and the first cat case of rabies since 1985. The raccoon was killed during an altercation with a dog. The dog, which was current on its rabies

vaccination, was treated by a veterinarian and received a rabies booster. The cat was a known feral animal previously seen in the area. It had approached a resident and began hissing and swiping at his foot, which the resident considered very unusual behavior for this animal.

In order to accurately track the distribution of terrestrial rabies, the CDPHE, State Veterinarian, and Division of Wildlife initiated a skunk rabies surveillance program. Since that time, 11 (29%) skunks have tested positive for rabies from 38 submitted for testing. One of these skunks was reported in mid-July from Cheyenne County in the same geographical region as the rabid raccoon and cat. These new cases emphasize the greatly increased risk of spillover infection to other wildlife and domesticated species in areas where rabies is circulating in the skunk population.

News Release from Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment 7/15/2008.

Skunk Rabies Widespread in Eastern Colorado; Rabid Cat and Raccoon Reported

DENVER-- Following confirmed reports of rabid skunks and a coyote last year, surveillance efforts by the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment have shown skunk rabies is widely circulating in eastern counties of the state. As anticipated, spillover infections from rabid skunks to other animals has occurred, with the confirmation of rabies in a cat and a raccoon last week. Both animals were found in Cheyenne County. This was the first rabid raccoon reported in Colorado since 1963 and the first rabid cat since 1985. State officials assume both animals were infected after contact with a rabid skunk.

Since the first of the year, 38 skunks have been submitted for laboratory testing; 11 (29 percent) tested positive for rabies. At least seven of the rabid skunks have been involved in attacks on domestic dogs or cats. The raccoon was killed after it attacked a dog. "These incidents emphasize why it is important that pet owners rural areas make sure their dogs' and cats' rabies vaccinations are up to date," said John Pape, an epidemiologist with the department who specializes in animal-related diseases.

Rabies is a virus that affects the nervous system of humans and other mammals, resulting in a fatal disease. The virus is shed in the saliva of infected animals. People and animals get rabies from the bite of a rabid animal or contact with saliva from such an animal. "While no rabid skunks yet have been reported in Front Range cities, we are continuing to monitor the situation," said Pape. "We have a cooperative surveillance project with local health departments and animal control agencies, the Division of Wildlife and Colorado State University to track the distribution of the disease in the eastern plains."

In 2008, skunk rabies has been reported in the following eastern counties: Arapahoe (2), Baca (2), Cheyenne (1), Kiowa (3), Kit Carson (1) and Yuma (2). In 2007, rabid skunks were reported from Prowers, Washington, and Las Animas counties in eastern Colorado. A rabid skunk also was reported in Mesa County in 2007. "We have been closely monitoring the skunk population after a positive coyote was confirmed in Prowers County last June," said Pape. "The coyote was infected with the skunk strain of rabies virus." In the past, isolated rabies cases in terrestrial animals have turned out to be a bat strain of the rabies virus, probably meaning the infected animal found and ate a bat, according to Pape. This was presumed to be the source of the infection in a rabid skunk found last year in Mesa County in western Colorado. "In eastern Colorado we are seeing the skunk strain of rabies circulating farther west than at any time in the last 30 years," Pape said. "The problem is skunks are highly efficient at transmitting rabies to other animals."

Having pets vaccinated is the simplest and most effective way to protect pets and family members from this deadly disease. Pet owners are encouraged to contact their veterinarian and get their pets up to date on vaccinations. "Even if no rabid skunks have been reported in your county, you should get the pets vaccinated and take a few simple precautions," said Pape. "We see bat rabies in every county of the state. Thirteen cases of rabies in bats have been confirmed by the lab this year."

Additional precautions should be taken to prevent possible exposure to rabies:

- Do not feed wild animals - this just brings them closer to your family.
- Teach children to stay away from wild or dead animals.
- Do not allow pets to roam freely, as this increases the chance they may be exposed without your knowledge.
- Keep your pet's rabies vaccination current, and maintain vaccination records.
- Contact your veterinarian if your dog or cat is bitten or scratched by a wild animal.
- If a family member or pet has been bitten or scratched by a wild animal, if possible safely contain the wild animal in case rabies testing is needed. People with possible rabies exposure should consult with a physician without delay.

Pape said signs of rabies in animals include abnormal behavior such as nocturnal animals being active in the day, animals approaching humans or other animals, difficulty with walking or movement and unusual animal sounds such as excessive bellowing in cows or hissing/chirping in bats. Some animals with rabies will be very aggressive (furious rabies) while others may appear almost catatonic (dumb rabies).

Skunks and other wildlife should not be handled. If a wild animal allows a person to approach and handle it, the animal is probably ill or injured and will bite in self-defense. A healthy animal usually will remain well hidden and avoid human contact. Suspected rabid animals should be reported immediately to local public health or animal control authorities.

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RABIES IN JEFFERSON COUNTY

Jefferson County submitted 3 bats during the past week for rabies testing bringing the total to 9 for this summer. One bat has tested positive for rabies this summer in Jefferson County.

For More Information on WNV and other Zoonoses visit our web site at <http://health.jeffco.us> or contact dvolkel@jeffco.us or jdale@jeffco.us

http://prodweb:8080/revize/health/health_T111_R19.htm to view past newsletters