

**Jefferson County Public Health  
Zoonosis and West Nile Virus (WNV)  
Newsletter # 6  
August 29, 2012**

**RABIES**

**RABIES IN COLORADO**

January 1 – August 10, 2012  
Lab Confirmed Rabies Positive Animals

County	Bat	Skunk	Fox	Other	Total
Archuleta	2				2
Bent		2		1-cow	3
Boulder	13				13
Chaffee	1				1
Cheyenne				1-cat	1
Denver	9				9
El Paso	2				2
Jefferson	10				10
Kiowa		2	1		3
Kit Carson		1			1
Larimer	10	25		2-bison, 1-raccoon	38
La Plata	1				1
Las Animas	1				1
Morgan		2			2
Otero		1			1
Pueblo	9	16	2		27
Weld	5	13	1		19
Totals	63	62	4	5	134

[http://www.cdphe.state.co.us/dc/zoonosis/rabies/lab\\_positive\\_animals\\_2012.pdf](http://www.cdphe.state.co.us/dc/zoonosis/rabies/lab_positive_animals_2012.pdf)

**RABIES IN JEFFERSON COUNTY**

JCPH has had 125 animals tested for rabies thus far this year that include 61 bats, 20 skunks, and 6 raccoons with ten bats testing positive for rabies. Historically bats have been the common carrier of rabies in Colorado but because of the approaching skunk rabies JCPH encourages everyone to have their domestic pets (dogs, cats, and ferrets) and livestock vaccinated for rabies. Any unvaccinated domestic pets or livestock that come in contact with a known or suspected animal infected with rabies will need to be euthanized or placed under 180 day quarantine in a secure facility such as a veterinary clinic. Save yourself financial and emotional stress by always keeping your domestic pets (dogs, cats, and ferrets) and livestock vaccinated for rabies.

Bats found in people's homes still make up the majority of bats that are submitted for rabies testing. Everyone should make sure that all windows and doors have screens in good condition and seal all other possible entry ways into your home like fireplaces and utilities (electrical, cable and water). Opening doors and windows without screens invites insects and bats into your home and possibly exposing your family and pets to WNV and rabies.

In addition to rabies vaccinations for pets and livestock, there are additional precautions to prevent possible exposure to rabies:

- Never feed, touch, or handle wild animals.
- Educate your children to observe wildlife from a safe distance.
- Do not leave pet food or livestock feed in areas accessible to wildlife.
- Maintain control of your pets by keeping cats indoors and keeping dogs under direct supervision.
- Spay or neuter your pets to reduce the number of unwanted or stray animals in your community.
- Call your city animal control office to remove stray animals from your neighborhood or Jefferson County Animal Control at 303-271-5070.
- Call the Colorado Division of Wildlife at (303)297-1192 if you have problems with wild animals.

# PLAGUE

## **PLAGUE IN COLORADO**

An individual from Archuleta County (SW Colorado) has tested positive for plague and is currently hospitalized in Denver. This is the first confirmed case of human plague in Colorado since 2006. The last human case in Archuleta County was in 1998.

While the investigation is still ongoing, the individual is believed to have contracted the disease while recreating with family northwest of Pagosa Springs in the Cimarrona Campground near Williams Creek Reservoir in the San Juan National Forest. San Juan Basin Health is coordinating with Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment and the National Forest Service to post warning signs in the campground and vicinity. It is common for plague to spread through rodent populations in a localized area – often resulting in mass “die-offs”. Rodent die-offs regularly occur in the southwestern United States.

## **PRECAUTIONS TO AVOID PLAGUE EXPOSURE**

- Avoid contact with all sick and dead rodents and rabbits. Prairie dog colonies that suddenly are not active may also be due to plague activity in the area.
- Use an insect repellent for all outdoor activities.
- DO NOT ever touch a dead wild animal. Do not approach or pick-up wildlife.
- Keep your pets from roaming and hunting and talk to your veterinarian about using an appropriate flea control product.
- Sick pets should be examined promptly by a veterinarian.
- If you hunt or trap rabbits or carnivorous wild animals, such as coyotes and bobcats, protect your hands and face while skinning or handling these animals. Fresh pelts may be treated with flea powder.
- Bites from wild carnivores and from cats and dogs have caused human plague. Such animals may be infected, carry the bacteria in their mouths or may transport infective fleas.
- DO NOT feed or entice any rodent or rabbit species into your yard, back porch, or patio.
- Eliminate rodent habitat, such as piles of lumber, broken cement, trash and weeds around your home or recreational cabin.
- Make sure that houses and outbuildings are as rodent-proof as possible. Keep foundations in good repair and eliminate overhanging trees from roof and windows.
- When outdoors, minimize exposure in rodent-infested areas. Do not catch, play with, or attempt to hand feed wild rodents.

## **WNV**

### **WNV NATIONAL**

Outside of Colorado, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and United States Geological Survey (USGS) have posted 1567 human cases of WNV with 66 deaths. Alabama (13), Arizona (16), Arkansas (25), California (44), Connecticut (3), District of Columbia (1), Florida (19), Georgia (21), Idaho (4), Illinois (21), Indiana (12), Iowa (5), Kansas (19), Kentucky (3), Louisiana (73), Maryland (12), Massachusetts (3), Michigan (71), Minnesota (35), Mississippi (98), Missouri (6), Montana (1), Nebraska (26), New Hampshire (1), New Jersey (4), New Mexico (6), New York (13), North Carolina (3), North Dakota (17), Ohio (43), Oklahoma (80), Oregon (1), Pennsylvania (12), South Carolina (8), South Dakota (98), Tennessee (5), Texas (733), Utah (2), Virginia (5), West Virginia (2), Wisconsin (1), and Wyoming (2):

The same 5 states continue to have the highest numbers with almost 70% of the cases coming from Texas at 733 and 30 deaths, Mississippi 98, South Dakota 98, Oklahoma 80, and Louisiana 73.

For updates during the WNV season visit the CDC and USGS websites at

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

[http://diseasemaps.usgs.gov/wnv\\_us\\_human.html](http://diseasemaps.usgs.gov/wnv_us_human.html)

### **WNV COLORADO**

As of August 24, 2012 the CDPHE is reporting 22 cases of human West Nile virus (WNV) identified in eleven different counties: Adams (2), Delta (5), Denver (1), Douglas (1), Fremont (2), Larimer (1), Mesa (3), Montrose (3), Morgan (1), Prowers (1), and Weld (2). Of these, 10 (45.5%) have been characterized as uncomplicated fever, 9 (40.9%) as meningitis, and 3 (13.6%) as encephalitis. There have been no deaths reported. The number of WNV infections will continue to increase because the majority of WNV cases historically are reported in September.

A total of 1,354 pooled *Culex* species mosquitoes and 24 equine specimens have been submitted for testing as of August 24, 2012. Of these, 111 (8.2%) mosquitoes and 8 (33%) equine specimens have tested positive for WNV.

For additional information on WNV in Colorado, including maps of WNV activity in Colorado, please visit:

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

### **WNV JEFFERSON COUNTY**

While there have been no reported cases in Jefferson County thus far the infection numbers from the rest of Colorado and across the country show that WNV is still a public health concern and everyone should remain vigilant and continue to practice the 5 "Ds".

- Always use **DEET** insect repellent for **ALL** outdoor activities (even out to get the mail). Additional insect repellents available are **Picaridin and Oil of Lemon Eucalyptus**, (Always follow Label Directions Carefully).
- **Dawn and Dusk are the times that mosquitoes are most active** so limiting outdoor activities at these times is a good practice.
- **Dress** in long sleeves and pants when outdoors and be sure to cover feet and ankles if you have outdoor activities.
- **DRAIN** and **EMPTY** all containers (toys, kiddie pools, flowerpots, buckets) in your yards because mosquitoes carrying WNV can bite at anytime and anywhere, even in your own yards. Make sure your gutters and downspouts are clean and running freely.
- Check your home to make sure all windows and doors have screens and are in good condition and always keep your doors closed to prevent mosquitoes and bats from coming into your home.

JCPH has issued a public service announcement encouraging the public to continue to take precautions against WNV, which can be read at <http://jeffco.us/health>

**For More Information** on Zoonosis and WNV visit our web site at <http://jeffco.us/health>

You may also contact the Jefferson County Public Health Zoonoses Program:

David Volkel: [dvolkel@jeffco.us](mailto:dvolkel@jeffco.us) 303-271-5730