



PUBLIC HEALTH IS PRICELESS

VERMILION COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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For Immediate Release

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Contact: Daniel Balgeman, 431-2662, ext. 245

DANVILLE -- A mosquito from the Hoopston area has tested positive for West Nile Virus.

The Vermilion County Health Department has collected 57 samples of mosquitoes since May, but the batch from Hoopston has been the first to test positive for the West Nile virus this year in Vermilion County.

During the months of May through the end of September, Environmental Health staff members set mosquito traps throughout the county. The trapped mosquito are then collected and tested for the West Nile virus. Currently, the department has 15 traps setup throughout the county.

During the mosquito season the Environmental Health Division asks the public's assistance in reporting birds that appear to have died of natural causes, and which may have West Nile Virus, by calling (217) 431-2662, ext. 5. These birds are collected and submitted to the University of Illinois' Veterinary School laboratory to be tested for the virus. One bird has been collected so far this season, and the laboratory results are pending.

The virus can be transferred to humans by the bite of the Culex mosquito if the mosquito has bitten an infected bird.

Symptoms of West Nile Virus can include a fever, body aches, joint pains, headaches, vomiting, diarrhea, or a rash, and can last up to several weeks. The Center for Disease Control says that only 1 in 5 people infected with the virus develop symptoms, and less than 1 percent of them develop severe or fatal neurological illness.

The Illinois Department of Public Health reports that, in 2016, there were total of 155 human cases of West Nile Virus in Illinois, and six disease-related deaths. That year, West Nile Virus was found in 61 counties in the state.

Taking some simple precautions can help you avoid mosquito bites, regardless of the type of mosquito or the diseases they carry. Precautions that the Illinois Department of Public Health recommends include the practice of the three "R"s – reduce, repel, report.

- REDUCE exposure - avoid being outdoors when mosquitoes are most active, especially between dusk and dawn.
 - Make sure doors and windows have tight-fitting screens. Repair or replace screens that have tears or other openings. Try to keep doors and windows shut, especially at night.



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- Eliminate all sources of standing water where mosquitoes can breed, including water in bird baths, ponds, flowerpots, wading pools, old tires and any other receptacles.
- REPEL - when outdoors, wear shoes and socks, long pants and a long-sleeved shirt, and apply insect repellent that contains DEET, picaridin, oil of lemon eucalyptus or IR 3535, according to label instructions. Consult a physician before using repellents on infants.
- REPORT - In communities where there are organized mosquito control programs, contact your municipal government to report areas of stagnant water in roadside ditches, flooded yards and similar locations that may produce mosquitoes. ###

