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226 Bordeaux St - Chadron, NE 69337
308-432-5545 fax 308-432-5601
E-mail: kcsr@chadrad.com

(Neb.)-Bird In Box Butte County Tests Positive For West Nile

By: Chris Fankhauser Posted at: 09/02/2013 01:13 PM

(Hemingford)-A dead bird from the Box Butte County has tested positive for West Nile Virus. According to Tabi Prochazka, Environmental Health Coordinator for Panhandle Public Health District, the dead bird and the many positive mosquito pools serve as a warning that the virus continues to pose a risk to people.

Prochazka urges residents to follow simple precautions to protect themselves and their families, which includes using a mosquito repellent that has DEET, wearing long-sleeved shirts, long pants, shoes and socks, taking extra precautions when going outdoors at dawn and dusk when mosquitoes are most active, getting rid of standing water, adding larvicides to animal drinking troughs, and keeping window screens in good condition.

Prochazka said West Nile is passed through the bite of a mosquito that has picked up the virus by feeding on an infected bird. In turn, the mosquito can pass the virus to humans. Routine mosquito trapping sites are in four Panhandle counties.

PPHD will continue the collection of dead birds and mosquitoes. Citizens may call 308-487-3600 ext 107 or toll free at 866-701-7173 ext 107 to report a dead bird. Testing will be done on birds that have died within 24 hours, with no signs of maggots or rotting. Testing on all birds will be carried out this year.

West Nile is flu-like signs such as fever and muscle weakness. Signs of West Nile encephalitis are swelling of the brain, disorientation, seizures and paralysis. People over 50 and those with weak immune systems are at a higher risk for the disease.

(Story courtesy PPHD)