

NEWS RELEASE

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For immediate release

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First bird from Nebraska positive for West Nile Virus found in the Panhandle Residents urged to practice prevention tips.

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

Prochazka urges residents to follow simple precautions to protect themselves and their families.

- Use a mosquito repellent that has DEET.
- Wear long-sleeved shirts, long pants, shoes and socks.
- Take extra precautions when going outdoors at dawn and dusk when mosquitoes are most active.
- Get rid of standing water.
- Add larvicides to animal drinking troughs.
- Keep window screens in good condition.

“West Nile is passed through the bite of a mosquito that has picked up the virus by feeding on an infected bird,” said Prochazka. 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.

For additional information visit www.pphd.org or call PPHD at 308-487-3600 or toll free at 866-701-7173. Panhandle Public Health District is working together to improve the health, safety and quality of life for all who live, learn, work and play in the Panhandle. Our vision is that we are a healthier and safer Panhandle Community.