

# Record Searchlight

## LOCAL

# Bug-borne disease discovered in Shasta County for first time in 50 years



**Damon Arthur**

Redding Record Searchlight

Published 8:53 a.m. PT Sept. 15, 2023 | Updated 4:11 p.m. PT Sept. 15, 2023

A disease that has gone undetected in Shasta County in more than 50 years has been discovered in a mosquito in Anderson.

A sample of 38 mosquitoes trapped in Anderson was found to have St. Louis encephalitis virus, which has symptoms similar to West Nile virus, according to the Shasta Mosquito and Vector Control District.

The last case of the encephalitis was detected in the county in 1972, officials said.

"While this is the first positive test result in five decades, it serves as a crucial reminder that mosquitoes remain a significant public health concern in our region," said Peter Bonkrude, District Manager.

While the disease was found in a mosquito, there have been no reported human cases of the virus.

"This record year has brought historic mosquito numbers, record high WNV positives in mosquitoes, and now re-emerging diseases. We are committed to protecting the community from vector-borne diseases and will be taking immediate action to address this finding," he said.

Like West Nile virus, the encephalitis symptoms can include headache, fever, nausea, vomiting and fatigue. "Severe neuroinvasive disease often involves encephalitis, an inflammation of the brain that can occur in some cases," district officials said.

Heavy rains this past spring brought a larger-than-normal number of mosquitoes this year. There has also been a record number of mosquitoes trapped carrying West Nile virus.

So far this year, there have been 131 mosquitoes found with the West Nile virus in Shasta County. There have also been four sentinel chickens test positive and one dead bird found that had contracted West Nile virus, according to the district.

To prevent transmission of the disease, county officials recommend residents drain standing water where mosquitoes breed and lay eggs. Mosquitoes can lay eggs in very small amounts of water, officials said.

People should also wear long sleeves and pants when outdoors at dawn and dusk, when mosquitoes are most active, officials said. They also recommend people use insect repellents and install screens on doors and windows.

*Reporter Damon Arthur welcomes story tips at 530-338-8834, by email at [damon.arthur@redding.com](mailto:damon.arthur@redding.com) and on Twitter at [@damonarthur\\_RS](https://twitter.com/damonarthur_RS). Help local journalism thrive by subscribing today!*