



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 25, 2001

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SUBJECT: West Nile Virus

Punta Gorda – The Charlotte County Health Department has announced that a dead bird found in the area of Jones Loop and Taylor Road has tested positive for West Nile Virus. The public is being notified so that protective measures may be taken when appropriate.

This is the first indication of the virus in Charlotte County. There have been no West Nile Virus infections identified in humans, sentinel chickens, or horses in the county. Additionally, mosquito activity is relatively low.

Mosquito-borne diseases are preventable by following personal protective measures:

- Avoid outdoor activities at dusk and dawn when mosquitoes are likely to be looking for blood meals;
- If you must be outdoors when mosquitoes are active, cover up by wearing shoes, socks, long pants and long-sleeved shirts;
- Use mosquito repellent; and
- Eliminate stagnant water in birdbaths and any other receptacles in which mosquitoes might breed.

Symptoms of West Nile Virus encephalitis include headache, fever, fatigue, dizziness, weakness and confusion. The virus has infected 11 Floridians this year. None of these cases have been fatal.

A West Nile Virus Hotline has been established to accept reports of dead bird sightings and provides educational information by calling 1-800-871-9703.

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