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County Needs Fish to Eat Virus-Carrying Mosquitoes

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County officials are scrambling to find fish that eat West Nile virus-carrying mosquitoes, it was reported Friday.

The county ordered about 425,000 mosquito fish at a cost of \$15,000 but none have arrived yet because the county's Barstow supplier says cooler weather has led to a sluggish breeding season, The San Diego Union-Tribune reported.

Pollution from wildfires also killed some populations, increasing demand for those that are left, according to the newspaper.

The fish are placed in standing pools of water that can attract mosquitoes.

Mosquito control is important because the pesky insects carry West Nile and other viruses, and can infect birds, horses and people.

So far this year, county officials have found 72 dead birds around the county infected with the West Nile virus, and a horse has died from it in Blossom Valley.

"This time last year there were only six (birds found with it)," county vector control program manager Kerry McNeill told the Union-Tribune.

No human West Nile cases have surfaced in the county this year but three human cases have been reported in Stanislaus and Tulare counties.

