



**Antelope Valley Mosquito
& Vector Control District**
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NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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First WNV Positive Birds Found in the AV

Lancaster, CA – The Antelope Valley Mosquito & Vector Control District (AVMVCD) reports that two dead birds that were collected in West Lancaster last week have tested positive for West Nile Virus (WNV).

Alert residents found a dead Cooper’s hawk near 40th Street West and Avenue K-6, and a dead American crow near 25th Street West and Avenue K and reported it to the Dead Bird Hotline (877-WNV-BIRD). After they determined that the birds qualified for testing, the AVMVCD was notified and sent staff out to collect the birds and subsequently ship them to the California Department of Public Health lab for testing.

“The dead bird surveillance is a great tool for us to see if WNV is in an area, but we rely on the public’s help to notice them and call the hotline,” said District Entomologist Karen Mellor. “We utilize our sentinel chickens and set traps to collect and test mosquitoes for the virus, but this adds another layer of surveillance to the picture. “

The current total of WNV infections in the Antelope Valley is 9 sentinel chickens from two different coops and two dead birds. To date the virus has been detected in 160 chickens, 684 dead birds, 1,171 mosquito samples, 5 horses and three squirrels in 37 Counties of California. There have also been 38 confirmed human cases with three fatalities this year.

Residents are encouraged to report any dead birds to the California West Nile Virus Hotline at 1-877-WNV-BIRD (1-877-968-2473) or online at www.westnile.ca.gov. Not all birds will be tested, but the data of dead bird clusters is vital in tracking and controlling the virus.

West Nile Virus is transmitted by the bite of an infected mosquito. Although most people that are infected do not show any symptoms, West Nile Virus is a potentially debilitating disease. Even 'mild' cases of West Nile Fever can cause patients enormous pain and discomfort for months.

District officials urge residents to take individual responsibility, and remember the 3 D's protect yourself and your family from West Nile Virus:

- * DRAIN all standing water – Empty out small containers at least once a week, keep pools and spas chlorinated or drained, and repair all water leaks. Conserve water and prevent mosquito breeding.
- * DUSK and DAWN – are peak activity times for mosquitoes.
- * DEFEND yourself - wear long sleeved shirts and pants and use mosquito repellents containing DEET, Picaridin, Oil of Lemon Eucalyptus, or IR3535 when outdoors during mosquito activity. Always follow instructions on the product label. Keep tight fitting screens on doors and windows to prevent mosquitoes from entering homes.

For any further questions or services please feel free to contact the Antelope Valley Mosquito & Vector Control District by phone (661-942-2917) or check us out online at www.avmosquito.org, like us on Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Antelope-Valley-Mosquito-Vector-Control-District/425659330805392>), or follow us on Twitter @AVMosquito.