



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

– **For Immediate Release**

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West Nile Virus found in more Chickens, Mosquitoes and Birds

Lancaster, CA – Eight additional sentinel chickens, two birds and one collection of mosquitoes have tested positive for West Nile virus the Antelope Valley Mosquito & Vector Control District (AVMVCD) reports. Three of chickens were reported from the same coops that had already tested positive two weeks ago. The other five were from a coop in Lancaster near 15th Street West and Avenue I that had positive chickens last year. The positive mosquitoes were trapped in an area near 30th Street East and Palmdale Blvd. District personnel picked up the dead birds that have tested positive in Lake Elizabeth and Leona Valley.

“This is the first time that we have found a positive mosquito pool,” District Entomologist Karen Mellor said. “It is also the first indication of West Nile Virus activity in Leona Valley and Lake Elizabeth.”

So far this year 416 human cases of West Nile Virus with 8 deaths have been reported in California, and nationwide counts stand at 689 human cases with 16 deaths. To date it has also been detected in 1,968 dead birds, 917 mosquito pools (a collection of adult mosquitoes), 309 horses and 449 sentinel chickens in 53 Counties in the State. The AVMVCD has received reports about the first two horse cases in Los Angeles County. Both were in the Burbank area and one died due to the infection.

Since Labor Day weekend usually means that a lot of people have backyard parties, the AVMVCD wants to remind everybody to use precautions from mosquito bites and the possible diseases that they can cause. When outside at dusk or dawn make sure to wear mosquito repellent containing DEET, Picaridin (Cutter Advanced) or oil of Lemon Eucalyptus.

West Nile Virus is spread by mosquitoes, which feed on the blood of infected birds and then pass it on to humans or other animals. West Nile Virus is not spread by person-to-person contact or by handling dead birds. The dead bird surveillance is an early warning system for the range of the virus. The public is asked to help by reporting recently deceased birds (except for pigeons, doves and chickens) by calling 1-877-WNV-BIRD (877-968-2473) or online at www.westnile.ca.gov.

Birds that are not picked up by the end of the day can be safely discarded in the trashcan using gloves, a shovel or an inverted trash bag to handle them.

All residents are urged to take individual responsibility for the protection of their families and animals. Here are a few easy suggestions to reduce mosquitoes in your yard and your neighborhood:

- * Make sure your sprinklers are set in a manner that will allow the ground to dry completely before the next cycle. Conserve water and prevent mosquito breeding.
- * Get rid of standing water – Empty out all small containers at least once a week, keep pools and spas chlorinated or drained, and repair all water leaks.
- * Get mosquito-eating fish (*Gambusia affinis*) for free, if you have sources that cannot be drained (e.g. fish ponds, pools, large horse troughs).
- * Wear long sleeved shirts and pants and use CDC recommended mosquito repellents (DEET, Picaridin, Oil of lemon eucalyptus) when outdoors during dusk and dawn. Always follow instructions on the product label.
- * Keep tight fitting screens on doors and windows to prevent mosquitoes from entering homes.
- * Horse owners should make sure their horses are properly vaccinated.
- * Report stagnant pools and other backyard sources to the AVMVCD.

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.