



**Antelope Valley Mosquito
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NEWS RELEASE

– **For Immediate Release**

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West Nile Virus Still Active in the Antelope Valley

Lancaster, CA – The Antelope Valley Mosquito & Vector Control District (AVMVCD) has received confirmation from the California Department of Health Services (DHS) that a dead European Starling that was submitted on August 8, 2006 has tested positive for West Nile Virus (WNV). A watchful West Palmdale resident found the dead bird and reported it to the State Hotline at 877-WNV-BIRD (968-2473). The State then dispatched the AVMVCD who in turn picked up the bird and shipped it to the California Animal Health and Food Safety laboratory for testing.

This is the first bird in the Antelope Valley that has tested positive for WNV this year and it was found near Marie Kerr Park at 30th St West and Avenue P. “We urge people throughout the AV to use insect repellents when they are outside at dusk and dawn and remove any standing water on their property. The close proximity to the park and the fact that there are two Starlight Concerts, one Family Movie Night and other evening events scheduled there makes it even more crucial to use precautions,” says District Entomologist Karen Mellor. “August and September is generally the peak season of virus transmission. Since infected mosquitoes are probably in other areas of the AV as well, people need to be aware of the potential danger and should also wear repellents when going to the evening events at the AV Fair.”

So far the virus has been detected in 688 dead birds, 495 mosquito samples, 284 Chickens, 16 horses and 84 humans from 49 Counties within the State. There has only been one fatality in an elderly woman of Butte County this year. To date Los Angeles County has identified WNV in a total of 30 mosquito samples, 13 dead birds, 5 chickens and 4 humans, of which two were asymptomatic blood donors.

West Nile Virus is here to stay and 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 FREE mosquito-eating fish (*Gambusia affinis*) if you have sources that cannot be drained (e.g. fish ponds, pools, large horse troughs).
- * Wear long sleeved shirts and pants and use mosquito repellents containing DEET, Picaridin or 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.

The public is asked to help with West Nile Virus surveillance and control efforts by reporting dead birds 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.

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.