



**Antelope Valley Mosquito
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NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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Mosquitoes Test Positive for West Nile Virus

Lancaster, CA – The Antelope Valley Mosquito & Vector Control District (AVMVCD) has received confirmation from the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) that a mosquito sample has tested positive for West Nile Virus (WNV).

This is the first mosquito sample that tested positive for WNV in the Antelope Valley this year. The mosquitoes were caught in a trap near 50th Street East and Avenue N in Palmdale on Monday night. “We have seen an increase in mosquitoes in our stationary trap in that area, so we decided to collect live mosquitoes and test them for WNV,” District Entomologist Karen Mellor said. “In agricultural settings such as this, we often see peaks in mosquito activity right after the fields are harvested. Adult mosquitoes seek shelter from the heat in the cooler, irrigated fields, and have nowhere to go when the crops are removed.”

Currently the total number of WN cases in the Antelope Valley is 1 mosquito sample and 2 birds.

Throughout California 41 Counties show WNV activity in 1,813 dead birds, 1,518 mosquito samples, 173 chickens, 8 horses and 17 squirrels. So far 162 people have tested positive for WNV, and there were 3 fatalities. To date in Los Angeles County, 40 people, 377 mosquito samples, 316 dead birds, 39 chickens, and 5 tree squirrels have been confirmed positive for the virus.

Residents are urged to clean or drain their pools, before the Vector Control Technicians pay them a visit, since it poses a Public Health threat and could also get expensive. If the home owner does not take any action, the AVMVCD is empowered by the California Health and Safety Code to fine them up to \$1,000 per day until the problem is fixed.

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. District officials urge residents 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:

- * 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).
- * 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.
- * Wear long sleeved shirts and pants and use mosquito repellents containing DEET, Picaridin, Oil of Lemon Eucalyptus, or IR3535 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.