



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

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For Immediate Release

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**Contact:**

Cei Kratz – District Manager  
Karen Mellor – Entomologist

### **West Nile Virus Makes a Late Season Appearance**

Lancaster, CA – The Antelope Valley Mosquito & Vector Control District (AVMVCD) has received confirmation that several blood samples from three chicken flocks in the district have tested positive for West Nile Virus (WNV). The chicken coops are located in East and West Lancaster, and one chicken in West Palmdale is still awaiting confirmation of the positive results with an additional test. The District maintains 8 flocks of sentinel chickens that are placed throughout the Antelope Valley to detect mosquito-borne viruses such as WNV, St. Louis Encephalitis and Western Equine Encephalitis.

“Although this is a bit late in the season to get our first positives, it is not unexpected,” said District Entomologist Karen Mellor. “Frankly, I was surprised that we didn’t show any activity sooner. Since the positive chickens are spread to three corners of the district, we can presume that the virus is active throughout the Antelope Valley.”

The rest of Los Angeles County has been hit hard this year with 10 human cases, 159 birds, 324 mosquito samples, 20 chickens, and 1 horse that tested positive for the WNV. That is the highest count in the State.

“We would like to remind residents to check their yards for any standing water after these past thunderstorms,” said Cei Kratz, District Manager. “Buckets, small containers, and especially pools that were dry are now holding enough water to produce hundreds of mosquitoes. That’s why it is important to dump buckets and pump out pools again.”

Residents are encouraged to continue reporting 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](http://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.

Also remember to:

- \* get FREE mosquito-eating fish (*Gambusia affinis*) for fish ponds, pools, and horse troughs.
- \* vaccinate your horses properly.
- \* report stagnant pools and other backyard sources to the AVMVCD.
- \* report dead birds by calling 1-877-WNV-BIRD (877-968-2473) or online at [www.westnile.ca.gov](http://www.westnile.ca.gov).

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](http://www.avmosquito.org).