



**Greater Los Angeles County
Vector Control District**
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INFORMATION RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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GLACVCD Confirms the First West Nile Virus Positive Birds in Los Angeles County for 2010

Los Angeles, CA— West Nile virus season is back. The Greater Los Angeles County Vector Control District (GLACVCD) has confirmed the first two West Nile virus positive (WNV+) dead birds of 2010 in Los Angeles County. The birds were collected from Silver Lake (zip code 90039) and Stevenson Ranch (zip code 91381).

An unusually wet winter season has generated an abundance of stagnant water throughout Southern California, creating prime mosquito breeding habitat throughout Greater Los Angeles neighborhoods. The recent sunny and hot weather coupled with this excess of stagnant water in neglected swimming pools, backyard containers, street gutters, and public drains and channels has set the stage for a potentially busy mosquito season this year.

“These two West Nile virus positive dead birds are evidence that West Nile virus continues to persist in Los Angeles,” says Director of Scientific-Technical Services Susanne Kluh. Kluh would like to remind residents that mosquitoes can breed in dirty, stagnant water that may accumulate in tires, plant pots and other containers during the rainy season. Residents can take an active role to prevent mosquito breeding and the transmission of West Nile virus by eliminating any stagnant water on their property. Dump out and turn over any small containers that are not in use to prevent rainfall accumulation. Keep your in-use pools and ponds clean. Drain your out-of-order pools or ponds, or call the District for free mosquito-eating fish that will feed on mosquito larvae. Remember – if they can’t breed, they can’t bite.

In addition to eliminating stagnant water, residents can be proactive in West Nile virus prevention by taking the following steps:

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- Make sure that doors and windows have tight fitting screens to prevent mosquitoes from entering your home.
- Wear light-colored, long, loose clothing, such as long sleeve shirts and pants when outdoors. Mosquitoes can bite through thin or tight clothes.
- Stay indoors when mosquitoes are most active: dawn, sunset, and early evening.
- Apply repellent whenever you are outdoors, even for a short period of time. Choose a repellent based on how long you plan to be outside and what you will be doing. Remember when you are sweating, physically active, or getting wet, repellents do not last long.

The public is encouraged to report dead birds to help with West Nile virus surveillance and control efforts because birds play an important role in maintaining and spreading the virus. **The California Department of Public Health officially resumed its testing of dead birds for West Nile virus on Monday, March 15th.** To reach CDPH, call their toll-free hotline at 877-WNV BIRD or visit them on-line at www.westnile.ca.gov.

West Nile virus is transmitted to people and animals through the bite of an infected mosquito. There is no cure for West Nile virus. One in five persons infected with West Nile virus will exhibit symptoms. Symptoms usually occur between 5 and 15 days and can include fever, headache, body aches, nausea, or a skin rash. These symptoms can last for several weeks to months. One in 150 people infected with the virus will require hospitalization. Severe symptoms include high fever, muscle weakness, neck stiffness, coma, paralysis, and possibly death.

The GLACVCD recommends that individuals exhibiting these symptoms consult a physician as soon as possible. Those at highest risk for severe cases of West Nile virus are the elderly and people with weakened immune systems.

For more information, please contact Crystal Brown at the Greater Los Angeles County Vector Control District at (562) 758-6511 or visit www.glacvcd.org.

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