



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

For Immediate Release

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About Bad Pools and Birds

Lancaster, CA – The Antelope Valley Mosquito & Vector Control District (AVMVCD) has just received confirmation from the Los Angeles County Veterinary Public Health and Rabies Control Department that a dead bird from Lancaster has tested positive for West Nile Virus (WNV).

The American Crow was reported to the West Nile Virus hotline by an observant Lancaster resident on May 20, 2009. This is the first dead bird that tested positive for WNV in the Antelope Valley this year. The crow was picked up by Animal Control at a residence near 35th Street West and Avenue L.

“Coincidentally we identified a mosquito problem in that area before hearing about the dead bird and have been intensively treating it since,” says District Entomologist Karen Mellor. “Water from lawn runoff that collects in the street gutter there and then is conveyed underground creates a perfect habitat for mosquitoes.”

In mid May, the District also contracted with Aerial Services to provide them with aerial pictures of the area to spot unkempt pools. Over 700 additional pools that we had not known about were identified as potential mosquito breeding sites. This brings the total to about 1100 bad pools within the District limits. “Since the housing market is constantly changing, the actual numbers could be even higher,” District Manager Cei Kratz said. “These pictures just give a starting point, but we will be vigorously working to get these and new pools either properly maintained or drained.”

Vector Control Technicians will be out in full force to check the pools that looked bad in the photos. Residents are urged to clean or drain their pools, since a dirty pool 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.

So far this year 8 Counties in California show WNV activity in 23 dead birds, 38 mosquito samples and 3 chickens. To date in Los Angeles County, 1 mosquito sample, 3 dead birds, and 3 chickens have tested positive for the virus. At this time last year there were 41 birds, 11 mosquito samples, and 2 chickens from 10 Counties reported to be positive for WNV.

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, 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.
- * Get FREE mosquito-eating fish (*Gambusia affinis*) for fish ponds, pools, and horse troughs.
- * 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.