



**Antelope Valley Mosquito
& Vector Control District**
42624 6th St. East
Lancaster, CA 93535
(661) 942 – 2917

NEWS RELEASE

– **For Immediate Release**

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Contact:

Karen Mellor, Entomologist
Karen@avmosquito.org
(661) 942 – 2917 ext. 206

Two More Birds Die of West Nile Virus in the Antelope Valley

Lancaster, CA – A Cooper’s Hawk and a Common Raven are the latest victims of West Nile Virus (WNV) in the Antelope Valley. The California Department of Health Services (DHS) informed the Antelope Valley Mosquito & Vector Control District (AVMVCD) that the two dead birds reported by alert residents tested positive for WNV. The hawk that was picked up in Quartz Hill near 46th St. West and Avenue L and the raven was found in Lancaster near 5th St. West and Avenue K.

That brings the total number of WNV cases in the Antelope Valley to 12 chickens and six dead birds. Of the dead birds three were from Lancaster, two from Palmdale and one from Quartz Hill. Three of the positive chickens were from a Palmdale flock and the others were from three different Lancaster flocks.

“This concludes a very successful mosquito season for us,” District Entomologist Karen Mellor says. “I have to commend our technicians for doing an excellent job in keeping the mosquito populations at a minimum. I also want to thank the residents of the Antelope Valley for doing their part in reducing standing water that supports mosquito larvae and thereby keeping their families and neighbors safe.”

As of 11/17/06 Los Angeles County reported a total of 13 human cases, 90 birds, 35 chickens, 76 mosquito samples and one tree squirrel that tested positive for West Nile Virus. Most of those cases were located in the San Fernando Valley. Statewide there have been 270 human cases of West Nile Virus with 6 fatalities and it has also been identified in 1385 birds, 831 mosquito samples, 635 chickens, 56 horses and 32 squirrels in 54 Counties in California. Nationwide 48 States have reported West Nile Virus activity with 3887 human cases and 120 fatalities.

With winter approaching it is important for residents to properly winterize their swimming pool if they are not using it. That means either drain all the water out and keep it dry after the rain, or keep the chlorine level high enough to kill bacteria. That way it will be easier to get things ready next spring. It is also important to reduce the water used for irrigation. “That is a way that all of us can conserve water and reduce mosquito populations,” Mellor says. “More information on water conservation in the AV is available at www.antelopevalleywater.org.”

Even during the winter the Antelope Valley Mosquito & Vector Control District will keep monitoring WNV activity in dead birds. Residents can help by reporting recently deceased birds to the dead bird hotline at 1-877-WNV-BIRD (877-968-2473) or online at www.westnile.ca.gov. West Nile Virus is spread by mosquitoes, which feed on the blood of infected birds and then pass it on to humans or other animals. West Nile Virus is not spread by person-to-person contact or by handling dead birds. 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.

All 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, unused pools, large horse troughs).
- * Keep tight fitting screens on doors and windows to prevent mosquitoes from entering homes.
- * Horse owners should make sure their horses are properly vaccinated.

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.