



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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MORE COUNTY BIRDS TEST POSITIVE FOR WEST NILE VIRUS *Virus Continues to Spread Throughout the County*

County Environmental Health officials announced today that two more dead birds tested positive for West Nile virus in San Diego County. The dead birds, a finch from the Scripps Ranch area of San Diego and an American crow found in Potrero County Park, 45 miles east of San Diego near the U.S./Mexico border, were both collected and sent to the State for testing on October 20, 2003. County Vector Control staff have been mobilized into the affected areas to treat known mosquito breeding sites.

The public continues to be the eyes and ears for Vector Control. The County will continue to pick up and test dead birds that are reported. If you find a dead bird, do not handle it or attempt to collect the bird yourself. **Dead birds do not need to be reported if:** they have been dead more than 24 hours; hit by a car, shot, or killed by animals; are covered with ants or flies; have a foul odor; or if their bodies are not intact.

Vector Control staff are also currently searching fire-impacted areas for un-maintained swimming pools, ponds and water features that may become mosquito-breeding sources. In order to protect public health and reduce the mosquito population staff are putting mosquito fish into these potential mosquito-breeding sources. Please advise the County if you know of any inoperative backyard water sources so they can be stocked with mosquito fish. As the wet weather approaches residents are also urged to check their property for standing water sources including plant saucers, old tires, rain collection barrels, uncovered boats, and children's toys.

To report dead birds, mosquito breeding areas or inoperative swimming pools, ponds and water features please call the County of San Diego Vector Control at 858-694-2888.

You can protect yourself from acquiring this virus by staying inside when mosquitoes are most active, wearing long sleeves and pants when outdoors, especially at dawn or dusk. When you must be outside use an insect repellent containing DEET. Keep screens on doors and windows and be sure they are in good repair. For more information about the West Nile virus, call the County's West Nile virus information line at 1-888-551-INFO (4636) or visit the official County West Nile virus website at www.SDFightTheBite.com.

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