



**San Gabriel Valley Mosquito &
Vector Control District**

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NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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- MORE WEST NILE VIRUS IN THE SAN GABRIEL VALLEY -

West Covina, CA (August 20, 2010) – On August 19, 2010, a dead bird picked up in the City of La Puente tested positive for West Nile virus. In addition, a chicken from a sentinel flock in the City of Claremont was also positive on initial screening and has been submitted to the California Department of Public Health Vector-Borne Disease Laboratory for confirmation. These results signify that **WNV is continuing to circulate in the San Gabriel Valley** and serves to remind residents to take necessary precautions against mosquito bites and mosquito breeding.

The District recently reported WNV-positive dead birds from the cities of Covina, West Covina, and Glendora. The District regularly tests dead birds and sentinel chickens from flocks located throughout the San Gabriel Valley as part of its ongoing surveillance program. Viruses like WNV and St. Louis encephalitis are transmitted to the chickens and other birds when they are bitten by infected mosquitoes.

West Nile virus activity has been lower in Southern California compared to prior years; however, in recent weeks WNV activity has increased. "We were lucky to have had cooler weather this spring and summer," said Steve West, General Manager of the District. "But with the onset of higher temperatures and increasing WNV activity, it's important that residents stay alert to the threat of mosquito-transmitted disease for the rest of the summer."

West Nile virus is endemic to California, and has been a public health problem every year since it was introduced in 2003. Kenn Fujioka, Assistant Manager

states, "This virus changes the playing field. Prior to WNV, we never identified mosquitoes infected with encephalitis-causing virus. We now find it each and every year." In response, the District has augmented its field operations and surveillance programs to include hiring more seasonal personnel earlier and keeping them on staff longer each year. **The District inspects an average of 1,300 potential breeding sources each week** for mosquitoes and treats them as necessary.

The District recently completed its highly successful **annual helicopter surveillance program with the Pasadena Police Department's Foothill Air Support Team (FAST)**. From the air, technicians documented 528 stagnant swimming pools – more than any year prior. The ongoing foreclosure crisis is continuing to make the battle against WNV challenging.

Many sources of standing water are difficult to find, such as above-ground pools, inoperable fountains, and ponds. And underground, urban runoff collects behind trash and leaf litter that collects in gutters and conveyances for stormwater. "Residents are often unaware of this hidden risk," notes Fujioka. "Preventing overwatering and sprinkler runoff not only saves water, but it can save lives." Residents are also encouraged to sweep up yard waste and keep lids on trash cans to ensure debris doesn't blow into street gutters.

Throughout the summer, basic protective measures should be followed:

- Check properties weekly and remove all sources of standing water
- Report 'green' inoperable pools or other sources of standing water to the District
- Wear effective repellents if outdoors when mosquitoes are present (between dusk and dawn)
- Ensure doors and windows are properly screened

The District encourages the public to help identify WNV "hot spots" by reporting dead birds to the **WNV Hotline at (877) WNV-BIRD (877-968-2473)** or online at **www.westnile.ca.gov**. We also urge our residents to **call the District to report any mosquito activity**.

The San Gabriel Valley Mosquito & Vector Control District is a public health agency dedicated to the control of mosquito and other vector-borne diseases.

The District can be reached at 626-814-9466 or on the web at www.sqvmosquito.org

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