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West Nile Virus Positive Dead Birds Collected in San Gabriel Valley

Collected dead birds are amongst the first detections of WNV in Los Angeles County this year.

West Covina, Calif. (June 5, 2023) — The [San Gabriel Valley Mosquito & Vector Control District](#) (SGVMVCD/District) has confirmed the first detection of West Nile virus (WNV) activity in its service area. The virus was detected in two dead birds, an American crow and unspecified songbird, collected in the city of Covina on May 25th.

This serves as the District's first detection of West Nile virus activity, and among the first detections for Los Angeles County this year. Mosquito samples have not tested positive for the virus within the surrounding community, nor in the San Gabriel Valley. The dead bird surveillance program serves as an early warning detection tool that helps identify when the virus is actively being transmitted within the bird population. The two dead birds were collected, shipped, and tested at West Valley Mosquito and Vector Control District which provides mosquito and bird testing for the District.

"While virus activity has not been detected in mosquito populations yet, this confirmation serves as an alert that mosquitoes may soon become infected in the region and residents should take preventative measures," said Director of Scientific Programs Tristan Hallum. "There is no cure or human vaccine for West Nile virus. Therefore, the best method of protection is to prevent mosquito bites."

Since West Nile virus is endemic to the San Gabriel Valley, it is typically detected by local public health agencies during Summer. As warm temperatures rise overnight, an increase in mosquito populations and virus activity will occur. The District will continue monitoring disease activity and controlling mosquitoes in public spaces through routine inspections and necessary treatments.

Mosquito control is a shared responsibility. Hallum urged residents to take an active role in reducing the threat of WNV in their communities by taking the following actions to stay healthy and bite-free:

- Tip out stagnant water around the home weekly;
- Toss unused containers that can hold stagnant water; and
- Protect against bites by using insect repellent containing any one of the following [CDC-recommended](#) ingredients: Picaridin, DEET, Oil of Lemon Eucalyptus (or PMD), or IR3535.

For more information, residents can contact the San Gabriel Valley Mosquito and Vector Control District at 626-814-9466, online at [SGVmosquito.org](#), or on social media: [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#).

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About SGVMVCD

SGVMVCD is one of five vector control districts in Los Angeles County. Year-round, the agency monitors stagnant water sources, such as gutters, storm drains, channels and non-functional swimming pools. The agency also routinely monitors populations of adult mosquitoes using traps and tests groups of adult female mosquitoes for the presence of WNV and other mosquito-borne diseases. In addition, the agency submits samples from dead birds, such as crows, for testing, which can provide insight into the spread of WNV.

About West Nile Virus

According to the [Los Angeles County Department of Public Health](#), West Nile virus (WNV) is spread by the bite of an infected mosquito. One in five individuals infected with the WNV, for which there is no cure, will exhibit symptoms that include fever, headache, body aches, nausea or skin rash. The symptoms can last for several days 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. Those at greatest risk include seniors and individuals with compromised immune systems. People over 50 years of age and those with chronic health problems are at higher risk of severe illness. While not all mosquitoes carry this virus, the type of mosquito that spreads this virus is found throughout Los Angeles County.