



**Greater Los Angeles County
Vector Control District**
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NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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First West Nile Virus Positive Mosquitoes in Los Angeles County in 2006

Mosquitoes collected from traps in Northridge, Chatsworth, and Santa Clarita are positive for West Nile virus and the first indication of West Nile virus activity in Los Angeles County in 2006. The mosquitoes collected by the Greater Los Angeles County Vector Control District were confirmed positive for West Nile virus on May 17, 2006 by the California Department of Health Services and the UC Davis arbovirus diagnostic laboratory.

The positive mosquitoes were collected from Northridge in zip code 91326, Chatsworth in zip code 91311, and the South fork of the Santa Clarita River in zip codes 91355.

West Nile virus is getting an earlier start this year in the San Fernando Valley. In comparison to last year, West Nile virus positive mosquito samples were first discovered in July 2005 in the San Fernando Valley, with a total of six West Nile virus positive mosquito samples from Santa Clarita, 16 samples from Chatsworth, and four samples from Northridge. To date, there are no West Nile virus positive birds, horses, or human cases in Los Angeles County.

“The public must remain vigilant and not let their guard down with West Nile virus. To prevent human cases from occurring, the District is urging residents who reside in areas with positive mosquitoes to take extra precautions and prevent mosquito bites, especially between dusk and dawn,” says Minoo Madon, Scientific-Technical Services Director for the Greater Los Angeles County Vector Control District.

To help prevent the spread of the West Nile virus, the District will be conducting surveillance by helicopter to locate out-of-service swimming pools, spas, and ponds that are potential mosquito breeding sources in the northwest end of the San Fernando Valley.

To help notify residents residing in areas with West Nile virus activity, the District will be posting West Nile virus warning signs in the following recreational areas: Porter Ranch Park and the South fork of the Santa Clara River from Via Princessa to Lyons Ave. The District does not discourage outdoor recreational activity, but warning recreation users to be more cautious of increased virus

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activity in this area. The peak time of concern is between dusk and dawn when mosquitoes are active, not during the day.

West Nile virus is here to stay and residents can protect themselves and their family by playing an active role in mosquito prevention by doing the following:

- Inspect front and backyards. Eliminate standing water in clogged rain gutters, rain barrels, discarded tires, buckets, watering troughs or anything that holds water for more than a week to break the mosquito life cycle.
- Ensure that swimming pools, spas, and ponds are properly maintained.
- Change the water in pet dishes and replace water in birdbaths weekly.
- Fix leaky faucets and sprinklers that may create puddles.
- Wear long sleeve shirts and pants outdoors at dawn and dusk when mosquitoes are most active.
- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends using mosquito repellents containing DEET, Picaridin, or oil of lemon eucalyptus.
- Keep tight fitting screens on doors and windows to prevent mosquitoes
- Pick up FREE mosquitofish at your local vector control district for placement in out-of-order swimming pools, spas, and ponds to control mosquitoes. Please call your local district before arriving to confirm mosquitofish are available.
- A West Nile virus vaccine for horses is available and horse owners should contact a veterinarian about timely vaccination.

The public is encouraged to report dead birds to help with West Nile virus surveillance and control efforts, as birds play an important role in maintaining and spreading the virus. The CA Department of Health Services toll-free hotline is 877-WNV BIRD or visit on-line at: www.westnile.ca.gov.

For more information please call (562) 944-9656 or visit: www.glacvcd.org