

News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Mosquitoes and Birds Test Positive for West Nile Virus in Clark County Health District Strongly Stresses Need for Protective Actions to Avoid Mosquito Bites

Eds.: Corrected August 5, 2005. The bird samples were collected from live mallards by the USDA.

(Las Vegas, Nev., - August 1, 2005) – The Clark County Health District has received confirmation from the Nevada Department of Agriculture Animal Disease Laboratory that two mallards and several clusters of mosquitoes have tested positive for West Nile virus. The bird and mosquito samples were collected in late July from the following Clark County zip codes: birds – 89109; mosquitoes – 89117, 89119, 89134 and 89007.

West Nile virus is spread through the bite of infected mosquitoes, which acquire the virus by feeding on infected birds. The illness is not spread person to person.

“During this critical time, we all need to practice mosquito prevention,” said Dr. Lawrence Sands, director of community health. “To reduce mosquito breeding, I strongly urge residents to eliminate areas of standing water around their properties and keep swimming pools in good working order,” said Sands.

The following preventive actions are recommended by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to reduce individual risk of mosquito-borne illness:

- Eliminate areas of standing water, including bird baths, un-maintained swimming pools and sprinkler runoff, which support mosquito breeding.
- Make sure doors and windows have tight-fitting screens without tears or holes.
- Avoid spending time outside when mosquitoes are most active, notably at dusk (the first two hours after sunset) and dawn.
- Wear pants and long-sleeved shirts, when outdoors.
- Apply an insect repellent containing DEET (N, N-diethyl-meta-toluamide) according to

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manufacturer's directions. *Repellents containing picaridin and oil of lemon eucalyptus also have some efficacy. However, DEET is the best-studied and most-effective repellent available.*

The Clark County Health District Environmental Health Division, in collaboration with the Nevada State Health Division and Nevada Department of Agriculture is continuing surveillance activities to monitor the extent of West Nile virus activity in Southern Nevada. Three categories of surveillance are currently underway in Clark County: dead bird testing, mosquito testing and sentinel chicken flock testing.

For additional information on West Nile virus, visit the health district website at <http://www.cchd.org>. The public may also call the West Nile virus hotline at (702) 759-1220 with questions, concerns or to report standing water and large numbers of mosquitoes.

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