



# NEWS RELEASE

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## Crow found positive for West Nile Virus

The State of Connecticut Mosquito Management Program announced that a crow found in Greenwich has tested positive for West Nile Virus (WNV). The crow, found on August 26, 2005 in the Old Greenwich area tested positive on September 1, 2005. This is the first positive bird in Greenwich this year. To date, the State of Connecticut has isolated the virus from birds in five towns including Greenwich, Stratford, Derby, Fairfield, and Newington.

WNV was also isolated from mosquitoes by the Connecticut Agriculture Experiment Station (CAES) in Greenwich in mid-August. Positive mosquito pools have been found in fifteen towns throughout Connecticut. WNV was isolated from several pools of *Culex pipiens* mosquitoes in August. This species is a bird and mammal-biting mosquito which breeds in artificial containers like discarded tires, birdbaths and catch basins. The Mosquito Management Program continues to trap and test mosquitoes at three areas in Greenwich as part of their program and testing will continue through the fall.

To date, no human cases have been isolated in Connecticut this season. However, this week, a Portchester, New York resident was diagnosed with the virus.

The Town of Greenwich continues the fight against West Nile Virus by conducting a preemptive larviciding program that includes the treatment of public and private roadway catch basins, public school ground catch basins and other property owned and operated by the Town as needed. The larvicide is reapplied every four to six weeks. Director of Health, Caroline Calderone Baisley stated, "Controlling the mosquito population in the larval stage through the application of larvicide has been found to be a prudent action."

Department staff have been around the Old Greenwich, Riverside area posting areas with signs and handing out flyers with information on the West Nile Virus and what people can do to reduce the risk of becoming ill. "It is important to get the word out on what people can do to reduce the chances of getting the virus," said Baisley. "Although the Town is continuing to do what it can, it is also crucial that people know what they can do as individuals to reduce their risk."

The Town, along with several State agencies will implement an integrated mosquito management program that includes monitoring and surveillance, education and prevention. Adult mosquito control will only be considered if necessary. In Connecticut in 2004 there was one (1) human case of West Nile Virus. Director of Health Baisley stated, "Although the town's larvicide program treats catch basins, the general public must be vigilant in eliminating standing water on their own properties and protecting themselves from biting mosquitoes at all times. It is important to recognize that the highest risk of human exposure to West Nile Virus infected mosquitoes is during the months of August and September."

The Connecticut Department of Public Health, which will conduct surveillance of West Nile Virus infection in humans and birds; and the Connecticut Department of Agriculture (DoAg), which will carry out surveillance in domestic animals. The University of Connecticut Department of Pathology and Veterinary

Science (UCONN) will conduct bird necropsy testing. Since bird testing has been the most sensitive indicator noting the presence of West Nile Virus in the community, residents are encouraged to report dead sentinel birds, such as crows, bluejays and ravens, to the Division of Environmental Services at 622-7838. Consistent with last year's procedures, the State will not require submission of additional birds for testing after three (3) birds have tested positive. To date there have been isolations of WNV from crows in four towns in Connecticut so far this year, none in Greenwich. Although all birds will not be submitted for analysis, residents are requested to call in dead bird sightings for tracking purposes. Once reported, birds may be wrapped in a plastic bag and discarded in the trash.

When bitten by an infected mosquito, most people are able to fight off the infection and experience either mild symptoms, such as headache and fever, or no symptoms at all. It is believed that approximately one in 100 persons bitten by an infected mosquito become ill. In a minority of infected persons, especially those over 50 years old, West Nile Virus can cause serious illness, including encephalitis and meningitis. Infection leads to death in 3 to 15 percent of persons with severe forms of the illness. The virus is spread to humans by the bite of an infected mosquito, which becomes infected when it bites a bird carrying the virus. West Nile virus is **not** spread by person-to-person contact or directly from birds to people. Although there is no specific treatment or cure, the symptoms and complications of the disease can often be treated. Most people who become ill recover.

In some individuals, including the elderly and persons with compromised immune systems, WNV can cause serious illness that affects the central nervous system. At its most serious, it can cause permanent neurological damage and can be fatal. General symptoms occur suddenly between 5 – 15 days following the bite of an infected mosquito and range from a slight fever, headache, rash, swollen lymph nodes, nausea, malaise and eye pain, to the rapid onset of severe headache, high fever, stiff neck, disorientation, severe muscle weakness, gastrointestinal symptoms, coma or death. Residents are encouraged to see a physician immediately if they develop any of these sudden symptoms.

Michael S. Long, Director of Environmental Services recommends that the following precautions be taken:

- Avoid outdoor activities at dawn and dusk when mosquitoes are most active.
- If you plan to be outdoors for a long period of time, wear long sleeved shirts, long pants and use mosquito repellent according to the manufacturer's directions on the label (10% or less DEET for children and no more than 30% DEET for adults). Avoid application of repellents with DEET on infants and small children.
- Cover up arms and legs of children playing outdoors and cover playpens or carriages with mosquito netting.
- Don't camp overnight near stagnant or standing water where mosquitoes are most active.

In addition, Greenwich residents are urged to continue to participate in the Town's mosquito control efforts by eliminating areas of standing water around their homes which includes:

#### **YARD AND HOME CHECKLIST**

- ✓ Get rid of old tires, tin cans, buckets, drums, bottles or any water holding containers.
- ✓ Fill in or drain any low places (puddles, ruts) in yard.
- ✓ Keep rain gutters, drains, ditches and culverts clean of weeds and trash so water will drain properly.
- ✓ Cover trash containers to keep out rainwater.
- ✓ Repair leaky pipes and outside faucets.

- ✓ Empty plastic wading pools at least once a week and store indoors when not in use.
- ✓ Make sure your backyard pool is properly chlorinated every day.
- ✓ Fill in tree rot holes and hollow stumps that hold water with sand or concrete.
- ✓ Change the water in birdbaths and plant pots or drip trays at least once each week.
- ✓ Keep grass cut short and shrubbery well trimmed around the house so adult mosquitoes cannot hide there.
- ✓ Eliminate collected water in boat or pool covers.
- ✓ Ponds and stagnant water bodies that do not support fish, frogs or other amphibians that eat mosquito larvae may be treated with a biological control agent such as *Bacillus thuringiensis israelensis* (BTI). It is suggested that the Department of Health or Conservation be contacted when treatment is considered.

For more information about the Town's larviciding program, personal protection and property management recommendations, the State of Connecticut mosquito management program, the following contact sites are available.

***The Town of Greenwich Mosquito Management Brochure is available throughout the community and on the Town's Website.***

Greenwich Department of Health Division of Environmental Services Greenwich Conservation Commission	<a href="http://www.greenwichct.org">www.greenwichct.org</a> (203) 622-7838 (203) 622-6461
Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection Communications Division DEP Mosquito Management Program Website Toll Free Mosquito Information Line	(860) 424-4100 <a href="http://www.mosquito.state.ct.us/index.asp">www.mosquito.state.ct.us/index.asp</a> 1-866-968-5463
Connecticut Department of Public Health Toxic Hazards Assessment Program Epidemiology Program	<a href="http://www.dph.state.ct.us">www.dph.state.ct.us</a> (860) 509-7742 (860) 509-7994
Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station Website	(860) 974-8604 <a href="http://www.caes.state.ct.us">www.caes.state.ct.us</a>
Department of Agriculture Website	(860) 713-2505 <a href="http://www.state.ct.us/doag">www.state.ct.us/doag</a>
Westchester County Department of Health Information Line Website	(914) 813-5609 <a href="http://www.co.westchester.ny.us/health">www.co.westchester.ny.us/health</a>