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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**SIX MORE BIRDS TEST POSITIVE FOR WEST NILE VIRUS
No Spraying Planned; Surveillance Increased**

The Westchester County Department of Health has received notification from the New York State Department of Health that six more birds found in Westchester County have tested positive for West Nile virus. Two of the birds were collected in Harrison and one each was collected in White Plains, Greenburgh, Pelham and Buchanan. The birds were collected for testing between September 4 and September 18. No spraying is planned at this time.

With the addition of these six new positive birds, a total of 52 dead birds from Westchester have tested positive for the virus this year. Out of 3,689 dead birds reported to the Health Department and 202 submitted for testing, 135 birds have been tested for West Nile virus, of which 83 have tested negative. To date, a total of 44 mosquito pools from Westchester have tested positive for the virus this year. Out of 685 mosquito pools submitted for testing, 683 have been tested for West Nile virus, of which 639 have tested negative. There has been one human case of West Nile virus reported in Westchester County this year.

Health Commissioner Dr. Joshua Lipsman again urged residents to take personal protection measures against mosquito bites while in their homes and when spending time outdoors. "It is particularly important that residents remain vigilant in their efforts to reduce their risk of West Nile virus infection until the first sustained frost because there is still risk from mosquitoes during this time," said Dr. Lipsman. Dr. Lipsman recommends that residents take the following personal protection measures against mosquito bites:

- Avoid being outdoors in places and during times where and when mosquitoes are active and feeding.
- Use insect repellants with no more than 30% DEET (N, N-diethyl-meta-toluamide) when outdoors in such areas at those times. Use 10% or less DEET for children. Do not use DEET on infants. Insect repellants should be used especially at dusk and evening hours when mosquitoes are most likely to bite. Be sure to read and follow the manufacturer's directions for use.

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- Wear protective clothing such as long pants, long-sleeved shirts, and socks when outdoors in areas and at times where and when mosquitoes are active and feeding.
- Make sure doors and windows have tight-fitting screens. Repair or replace screens that have tears or holes.

Mosquitoes capable of carrying West Nile virus lay their eggs in stagnant water. The eggs can develop in any pool or puddle of water that stands undisturbed for more than four days. Mosquitoes will breed in any untreated water, so the County Health Department recommends doing the following around your home:

- Rid your property of tin cans, plastic containers, ceramic pots or similar water-holding containers
- Remove discarded tires
- Drill holes in the bottoms of all recycling containers that are left outdoors
- Turn over plastic wading pools and wheelbarrows when not in use
- Change the water in birdbaths at least twice weekly
- Sweep your driveway after it rains so that it is free of puddles
- Keep storm drains and gutters clear of leaves and debris
- Clean and chlorinate swimming pools, outdoor spas and hot tubs and drain water that collects on their covers.

Under County Executive Andy Spano's mosquito control program, *Operation Mosquito S.T.I.N.G.* (Stop The Insect's Next Generation), the County has applied larvicide to catch basins countywide to kill immature mosquitoes and have been collecting mosquitoes and dead birds for testing.

Since West Nile virus is in the area, it is important that residents take precautions against being bitten by mosquitoes and help to eliminate standing water in their neighborhoods that can serve as mosquito breeding sites. The Health Department is encouraging residents to report dead birds and large areas of standing water through its Public Health Information Line at (914) 813-5609 and through its internet site,

www.westchestergov.com/health.

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