

ANDREW J. SPANO, Westchester County Executive
JOSHUA LIPSMAN, M.D., M.P.H., Commissioner of Health
SUSAN TOLCHIN, Director of Communications

CONTACT: SUSAN TOLCHIN
MARY LANDRIGAN

(914) 995-2932
(914) 813-5013

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 14, 2002

**TWO CROWS FOUND IN WHITE PLAINS TEST POSITIVE FOR WEST NILE VIRUS
No Spraying Planned; Surveillance will be increased**

The Westchester County Department of Health today received notification from the New York State Department of Health that two crows found in White Plains have tested positive for the West Nile virus. With the addition of these two birds, there have been a total of 10 West Nile virus positive birds found in Westchester County. The dead crows were collected for testing on July 31.

To date, 82 birds have been tested for West Nile virus, 72 have tested negative. No positive human cases of West Nile virus have been detected in the County. No spraying is planned at this time.

Health Commissioner Dr. Joshua Lipsman said that since West Nile virus has been reported in our region in previous years, the emergence of positive birds at this time is not surprising. Westchester County has been preparing for this eventuality and has all of its systems in place to combat the virus.

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.

MORE

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.

Personal protection measures to take against mosquito bites include:

- Using insect repellants with no more than 30% DEET (N, N-diethyl-meta-toluamide) when outdoors for extended periods of time. Use 10% or less DEET for children. Do not use DEET on infants. Insect repellants should be used during the time of year (April through October) and at dusk and evening hours when mosquitoes are most likely to bite. Be sure to read and follow the manufacturer's directions for use.
- Wearing protective clothing such as long pants, long-sleeved shirts, and socks when outdoors for extended periods of time.