

To: Mayors and Regional District Chairs: South and Central Areas
MLA's South and Central Okanagan
Chiefs: Osoyoos Indian Band, Penticton Indian Band, Wesbank First Nation, Lower and Upper Similkameen Bands

Copy: Chief Administrative Officers
Mosquito Control Officers
Economic Development Offices
Local Tourism Offices

From: Dr. Andrew Larder – Senior Medical Health Officer
Dr. Paul Hasselback – Medical Health Officer
Dr. Robert Parker – Medical Health Officer

Date: August 12, 2010

RE: IDENTIFICATION OF WEST NILE VIRUS IN A BIRD

A bird collected on August 3rd and tested on August 10-11 has tested positive for the West Nile Virus. The bird was found in Central Okanagan.

The confirmation of the presence of West Nile Virus in the Okanagan has been expected, and while the location is further north than anticipated, it is reflective of what is known and expected regarding West Nile Virus.

Additional mosquito surveillance will be undertaken in the Central and North Okanagan given the location of the demise of the bird.

The presence of mosquito or bird West Nile Virus usually precedes human illness by a few weeks, and cases of human illness may occur up to September.

Communications to the public through the media will occur on the morning of August 12. Such communications will affirm the importance of personal protection against mosquito bites and reducing mosquito breeding areas on private lands. The attached press release is provided for your benefit.

Jurisdictions throughout the south and central Okanagan have been diligent in treating mosquito breeding grounds and are to be commended for their efforts. Additional activities to reduce mosquito larvae will be undertaken in some lands that previously were not being accessed and are not public lands. This may cause some concern for owners, particularly conservation based organizations.

Should you have any question or concerns please call Linda at 250-868-7729.

BACKGROUND

For Immediate Release
2010HLS0040-000941
Aug. 12, 2010

Ministry of Healthy Living and Sport
Interior Health Authority
BC Centre for Disease Control

TAKE MEASURES TO PROTECT YOURSELF FROM WNV

Since 2003, the BCCDC has co-ordinated a provincewide surveillance program for WNV, which includes testing of dead birds in the corvid family: crows, ravens, magpies and jays, as well as mosquito surveillance, animal and human testing. Corvids are more likely than other birds to die from WNV and can be an indicator that the virus has moved into an area.

How to protect yourself from WNV

- Use mosquito repellent – apply mosquito repellent to areas of exposed skin. Check the product label for instructions on proper use. Repellents containing DEET are safe if the label precautions are followed. DEET-free products are available, but may not provide as long-lasting protection. View the HealthFile on DEET (link below) for guidelines on how frequently to apply repellent, as recommendations change depending on age.
- Wear protective clothing – avoid dark clothing, as it tends to attract mosquitoes. If you are in an area with lots of mosquitoes, wear loose fitting, full-length pants and a long-sleeved shirt to keep mosquitoes from biting. Mosquitoes that can carry WNV are most active at dusk and at dawn. Avoid using floral fragrances such as perfumes, soaps, hair-care products and lotions.
- Install mosquito screens on windows – consider staying indoors between dusk and dawn and in the early evening.
- Prevent mosquito breeding around your home – anything that can hold water is a likely mosquito-breeding area. Try to identify and remove these areas on your property. A few things to do include:
 - Empty saucers under flowerpots.
 - Change water in bird baths twice a week.
 - Unclog rain gutters.
 - Drain tarps, tires and other debris where rain water may collect.
 - Install a pump in ornamental ponds or stock them with fish. Stagnant backyard pools can be a big source of mosquitoes and should be maintained regularly to prevent mosquito growth.

If you find a dead bird

Members of the public can report or submit dead corvid birds (crows, ravens, magpies and jays) by using the form at <http://westnile.bccdc.org> or by calling 1 866 300-0520.

For more information

Interior Health: www.interiorhealth.ca

WNV HealthFile: www.healthlinkbc.ca/healthfiles/hfile88.stm

Insect Repellent and DEET HealthFile: www.healthlinkbc.ca/healthfiles/hfile96.stm

BC Centre for Disease Control: www.bccdc.ca/westnile

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Media Contacts: Lannea Parfitt
Interior Health
250 870-5898

Ritinder Harry
BC Centre for Disease Control
604 707-2412

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