



NEWS



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Another bird tests positive for West Nile Virus in McLean County

BLOOMINGTON – The McLean County Health Department has received notification that a bird from the 61704 zip code area has tested positive for West Nile virus (WNV) this week. This newest case marks the fourth bird testing positive for WNV in McLean County this season. Previously reported birds came from the 61752, 61701 and 61761 zip code areas. With WNV surveillance activities slated to conclude for the season on Saturday, October 15th this year, the Health Department will no longer be collecting any additional dead birds.

Residents continue to be encouraged to take precautions against getting mosquito bites until the weather remains consistently at or below 55 degrees. Mosquitoes that can carry WNV are typically present from mid-April until October.

Preventative steps residents can take to reduce their risk of WNV infection include:

REDUCE exposure:

- ✓ wear protective clothing like long pants and long-sleeved shirts, along with socks and shoes, when outside from dusk until dawn (the time when the Culex mosquito is most active)
- ✓ repair and replace worn or torn screens on doors and windows
- ✓ eliminate stagnant, shallow water weekly to prevent mosquitoes from breeding (including bird baths, flower pots, wading pools, old tires and other receptacles that collect water)

REPEL mosquitoes:

- ✓ apply insect repellent that contains DEET, picardin, or oil of lemon eucalyptus, according to label instructions (consult a physician before using repellents on infants)

As reported in the *West Nile Virus Environmental Surveillance Weekly Update* from the Illinois Department of Public Health posted October 12th, McLean County is one of 54 counties in Illinois with confirmed WNV activity and there have been 2,392 positive mosquito pool samples, 70 positive birds, and 115 reported human cases of WNV statewide.

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West Nile Virus is a mosquito-borne disease that can cause encephalitis, an inflammation of the brain. Culex mosquitoes, also known as the house mosquito, become infected with the virus by feeding on infected birds and produce more WNV-positive mosquitoes. Those mosquitoes then seek blood meals and subsequently infect humans and animals.

Mild cases of WNV can cause a slight fever or headache. Severe infections can lead to high fever, disorientation, and even paralysis or death. Persons at highest risk for serious illness are young children, adults 50 years of age or older and people with compromised immune systems. Anyone concerned about their risk or experiencing symptoms should contact a physician immediately and inform the doctor of any recent mosquito bites.

WNV surveillance and prevention efforts in McLean County are funded by a grant from the Illinois Department of Public Health. For more information about WNV and other mosquito-borne illnesses, visit the health department's website at <http://health.mcleancountyil.gov/490/Mosquito-Borne-Illnesses>.

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