



# NEWS RELEASE

Kern County Department of Public Health

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## **1<sup>st</sup> DEAD BIRD FOUND IN BAKERSFIELD TESTS POSITIVE FOR WEST NILE VIRUS**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Dr. Claudia Jonah, Interim Health Officer for Kern County, has announced that Kern County Department of Public Health received confirmation that a dead bird found in Bakersfield has tested positive for West Nile virus (WNV). This is the first confirmed positive test of WNV to be found in Kern County this year.

“There have been no human cases of the virus reported so far in Kern County this year,” said Dr. Jonah.

Detection of this WNV positive bird is an indicator that the potential for activity still exists locally. It emphasizes that this season’s preventive measures need to begin immediately and should continue until season’s end. While it is unknown at this time how active WNV will become in terms of human cases, community-wide attention to strict prevention of exposure to mosquitoes and elimination of their breeding conditions can reduce the number of anticipated cases.

WNV is transmitted to humans and animals through a mosquito bite. Mosquitoes become infected when they feed on infected birds. Dr. Jonah urges all Kern County citizens to reduce their risk of mosquito-borne diseases by following the 3 D’s of WNV Prevention:

**DUSK/DAWN**—Avoid spending time outside when mosquitoes are most active, especially at dawn and the first two hours after sunset.

**DEET**—Apply insect repellent containing DEET according to label instructions.

**DRAIN**—Eliminate all sources of standing water that can support mosquito breeding. Contact your local mosquito and vector control agency if there is a significant mosquito problem where you live or work.

For more information about WNV in California or to report dead birds online, visit the California West Nile virus website at <http://westnile.ca.gov>, or call the Kern County Department of Public Health at 868-0554.

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