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FIRST WEST NILE VIRUS POSITIVE MOSQUITO POOL AND BIRD IDENTIFIED IN KERN COUNTY FOR 2009

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Dr. Claudia Jonah, Public Health Officer for Kern County, has announced that the Kern County Department of Public Health received confirmation today that a mosquito sample in Kern County has tested positive for West Nile Virus (WNV). This is the first mosquito sample found positive for the virus this year. The infected mosquito sample was discovered in a trap located in the 93314 zip code area.

An American Crow found near Coffee Road and Hageman Road has also tested positive for WNV.

“While there are no human cases of the virus confirmed in Kern County so far this year,” said Dr. Jonah, “this is evidence that local WNV activity still exists and we must all remember to use personal protection and eliminate sources for mosquito breeding to prevent the spread of the disease to humans.”

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 mosquito problem where you live or work. Mosquito prevention measures in the Kern Mosquito and Vector Control District, including cold fogging, were continued through the winter. Efforts were ramped up during the spring when seasonal mosquito control technicians





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were hired in April 2009 to contact owners of neglected swimming pools to correct problems prior to the onset of hot weather which favors mosquito breeding.

Doves, pigeons and quail are not being tested for WNV. Other bird species that have been dead for less than 24 hours and are not decaying can be tested. If a bird is found that is already decaying it should not be handled with your bare hands. Place it in a tied off "doubled" plastic bag and throw away in a garbage container. Please report these birds even though they will not be tested.

For more information about WNV and to report green swimming pools in Kern County, call the Kern Public Health WNV Hotline, **1-877-81-VIRUS** (1-877-818-4787). To report dead birds or squirrels, call the California Department of Public Health WNV line at 1-877-WNV-BIRD (968-2473) and select to speak to a hotline operator; or online at <http://westnile.ca.gov>.

