

Health Unit Media Release

Contact:

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West Nile Virus Update

Effective October 18 2006 the Leeds, Grenville and Lanark District Health Unit will no longer be submitting crows and blue jays for the purpose of testing for the West Nile virus. However, reports of large die offs of migratory bird species and suitable specimens will continue to be reported to the Canadian Wildlife Cooperative in Guelph as part of the avian influenza surveillance program. The Medical Officer of Health Dr. Anne Carter would like to thank the members of public for their assistance in the 2006 West Nile virus (WNV) surveillance program.

It is anticipated that our surveillance program will resume once again in the spring of 2007. The Health Unit will notify the public when the surveillance program is expected to resume for the 2007 season.

During the summer of 2006 our Health Unit detected one WNV positive crow out of the 19 crows and blue jays that were submitted and tested for the virus. The crow was found in Rideau Lakes Township, just outside of Smiths Falls, Ontario.

The Health Unit has also continued its annual mosquito surveillance program in 2006. Thousands of mosquitoes were trapped throughout the summer season and tested for WNV at Cosray Labs in Deep River, Ontario. To date all mosquitoes have tested negative for the WNV. The goal of both the bird and mosquito surveillance programs is to detect the presence of the virus within our geographical area, and most importantly to serve as an early warning sign that human cases may occur.

The Health Unit would also like to report to the members of our public that once again to date in 2006 no known local human cases of WNV have been reported to the Health Unit.

If you would like more information on WNV activity in Ontario, please consult with the Ministry of Health and Long-term Care Provincial Website located at the following link:
<http://www.health.gov.on.ca/index.html>

For further information on West Nile virus contact the Health Unit's Website at
www.healthunit.org

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