

Health Unit Media Release

For Immediate Release: October 2, 2008



DEAD BLUE JAY FOUND IN SMITHS FALLS IS POSITIVE FOR WEST NILE VIRUS

The Leeds, Grenville and Lanark District Health Unit has received notification from the Canadian Cooperative Wildlife Health Centre that a **dead blue jay found on September 26, 2008 in the Town of Smiths Falls was positive for West Nile Virus.**

This is the second positive dead bird in the tri-county area this season. To date 29 dead birds have been collected and tested for West Nile Virus (WNV). The first positive bird was a dead crow found in the Perth area in early August. The health unit has just wrapped up the mosquito trapping and testing program for the season. No positive mosquito pools were identified over the 2008 season. **As the cool weather continues, the risk of mosquitoes will also continue to decline, as the conditions for breeding are reduced.**

Jane Lyster, Director of Health Protection with the Leeds Grenville and Lanark District Health Unit would like to reassure the public that the risk of contracting WNV in our area is very low. WNV is predominantly a disease of birds that can be transmitted to humans by the bite of an infected mosquito.

The Health Unit encourages property owners to continue to do a thorough fall clean up including cleaning eaves troughs, and emptying containers that trap water and can provide overwintering sites for mosquitoes.

Across the Province of Ontario this year WNV activity has been low. Further information on WNV and tips on reducing mosquito breeding sites can be found at www.healthunit.org/westnile.

-30-

Contact:
Jane Lyster, Director of Health Protection,
613-345-5685 or 1-800-660-5853