

Leeds, Grenville and Lanark District Health Unit Media Release

Date: May 12, 2009

Dead Birds No Longer Accepted For West Nile Virus Surveillance

The Leeds, Grenville and Lanark District Health Unit will not be accepting dead birds as part of the Provincial West Nile Virus Program in 2009. The following decision was made by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, and has directed Ontario Health Unit's that:

“Effective 2009, Ontario will no longer be conducting a West Nile virus (WNV) dead bird surveillance program. Dead corvids are no longer required as an early indicator of WNV because information collected over the past few years has not confirmed when and where the virus will most likely appear. Ontario will continue to use other indicators, such as mosquito surveillance, to determine the human health risk of WNV in the province.”

If you do come across a dead bird and need to dispose of it, please follow these simple instructions:

- Dead birds should be disposed of by double bagging and placing the carcass in a regular garbage disposal system or buried with a minimum of two feet of soil cover.
- Use of shovel or rubber gloves when handling dead birds.
- Wash hands thoroughly with soap and warm water, or use a hand sanitizer.

The Health Unit will continue to do mosquito monitoring throughout the tri-county area for 2009. Last year no positive mosquito pools were found in our area although one bird tested positive for WNV.

It is suggested that if you find a dead wild animal of any type, please call the Canadian Cooperative Wildlife Centre (CCWHC) at the following number: 1-866-673-4781.

For more information visit our website at www.healthunit.org.

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Contact: Ms. Joan Mays, Manager of Health Protection (613) 345-5685 and
1-800-660-5853