

Medical News

2006 has been a fairly quiet year locally for West Nile Virus (WNV). WNV was detected in mosquitoes in the San Fernando and Santa Clarita Valleys in May, and again recently in the Sepulveda Basin (zipcode 91436). Some chickens showed evidence of exposure to WNV in the Antelope Valley. Since last year, WNV had not been detected in local wild birds, horses or people. That changed today, when WNV was detected in two local crows.

VCA Wilshire Animal Hospital in Santa Monica submitted one of the positive crows. The bird had been picked up by a good Samaritan in the Venice area. The ill crow was euthanized due to neurologic symptoms.

Clinic personnel contacted our office and submitted the bird for testing. The second crow was collected from a residence in Van Nuys (91406). Both birds were positive for WNV on the screening test conducted by Veterinary Public Health.

Generally, human and equine cases begin to appear after WNV is found in wild birds. With the warm weather, the mosquito life cycle is shortened. Everyone should remain vigilant and take precautions to avoid mosquitoes. Standing water should be eliminated around homes and the screens on homes should be in good condition. People should use mosquito repellants if they have to be outside when mosquitoes are active (dawn and dusk). Horses should be up to date on their WNV vaccinations.