

**LOS ANGELES UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
PEST OF THE MONTH PROGRAM NUMBER 35**

WEST NILE VIRUS RESURGENCE IN 2007 IN CALIFORNIA.

Incidences of West Nile Virus are on the increase in California in 2007. This comes as a surprise to many people who associate this disease with water and mosquitoes. What is now known is that from July 1, 2006 to June 30, 2007, only about 3.51 inches of rain fell in downtown Los Angeles. The normal precipitation for this area is about 15 inches. This number is the lowest since records started to be kept some 130 years ago. What is now obvious is that we are in a severe drought. People are wondering if we are in a drought, there shouldn't be any stagnant water from rainfall for mosquitoes to breed in. While there is some truth to that statement, the fact is that in large urban metropolitan areas such as Los Angeles County, most mosquito breeding takes place in human-created water sources that occur above and below ground. In order to impact mosquito breeding, we need to pay attention to all outdoor water uses to make sure we are not creating stagnant water puddles for mosquitoes to breed in.

The City of Los Angeles is urging all residents to conserve water and cut back on water use by at least ten percent. Water conservation is necessary after a record dry winter season and very low snowfall in the Sierra Nevada Mountains from where the City obtains about half its water. Los Angeles Unified School District is one of the largest users of water in Los Angeles County. Much of this water is being used outdoors in the landscape and for exterior washing. We need to check to ensure that our irrigation systems are functioning properly. Check and adjust irrigation timers to make sure that they are not dispensing more water than is necessary. Irrigating to the point of runoff and the creation of puddles is not necessary. Excessive water in the soil displaces oxygen that is necessary for good root growth and development. Water logged soils are extremely conducive to pathogenic fungal root rot diseases which kill vegetation. It is a known fact that more vegetation is killed by over-watering than by under-watering around structures in California. Evaluate your sprinkler system when they are on so as to make sure that they are irrigating in areas that need watering. Over-watering wastes water and create possible breeding sites for mosquitoes that carry West Nile Virus. Keep outdoor washing to a minimum and use just enough water to get the job done and no more. Do not neglect indoor water wasting sources as they can be significant. **Be reminded that a faucet leaking one drop per second wastes about 2,700 gallons of water a year.** Visit www.bewaterwise.com or call the Department of Water and Power at 1 800 – DIALDWP (1 800 342-5397) for both indoor and outdoor water conservation ideas.

The following table illustrates the current situation with West Nile Virus in California. Cases of the disease are on the rise compared to this time last year. The early heat has provided for an earlier onset of the disease. People need to be aware that the risk from West Nile Virus is still out there and we all need to take necessary precautions.

INFECTIONS YEAR-TO-DATE

	2006	2007
Counties affected	22	26
Human cases	1	3
Horses	0	2
Dead birds	95	159
Mosquito samples testing positive	59	141

In Los Angeles County, mosquitoes collected from traps in Granada Hills, Rowland Heights, and near Whittier Narrows tested positive for West Nile Virus. Three dead birds retrieved from Northridge and El Monte also tested positive for the disease. What this means is that the virus is circulating in the environment and under the right set of circumstances, it can be easily transmitted from infected birds to people by mosquitoes.

Just a reminder, the state of California West Nile Virus web site is

www.westnile.ca.gov

The Los Angeles Unified School District has posted a lot of useful information on West Nile Virus on its URL site **<http://laschools.org/pom>**

Los Angeles Unified School District Pest of the Month Program numbers 15, 17, 18, 19, 24, 29, 32, and 34 contain additional useful information on West Nile Virus and disease prevention. All of these programs can be accessed at the above URL.

Southern California is in the grips of the most severe drought in recorded history. This area is essentially a desert and water is a very precious commodity here. Everyone needs to do his/her part, both at home and at the workplace, to conserve water. When you use water sparingly, you are also helping to prevent the breeding of mosquitoes which carry West Nile Virus. By economizing on your water consumption, you can help to save a life. Thank you for your help on this matter.

