



**The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Health and Human Services
Department of Public Health
250 Washington Street, Boston, MA 02108-4619**

DEVAL L. PATRICK
Governor

TIMOTHY P. MURRAY
Lieutenant Governor

JUDYANN BIGBY, M.D.
Secretary

JOHN AUERBACH
Commissioner

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CONTACT:

Donna Rheame
617-624-5006

WEST NILE VIRUS DETECTED IN BIRD FOR FIRST TIME THIS SEASON

Health officials remind public to take steps to avoid mosquito bites

BOSTON — The Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) announced today that West Nile virus (WNV) has been detected in a bird in Massachusetts for the first time this year. The bird was collected in the city of Marlborough in Middlesex County.

There have been no human cases of WNV or Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE) so far this year.

In 2006, there were three human cases of WNV, with no fatalities. While WNV can infect people of all ages, people over the age of 50 are at higher risk for severe disease. WNV is usually transmitted to humans through the bite of an infected mosquito.

“The identification of the virus in a bird means that West Nile virus continues to present a risk to human health throughout Massachusetts,” said DPH Director of Communicable Disease Control, Dr. Al DeMaria. “We want people to realize that the risk is real but that they can act to control the amount of risk they face by taking personal protective measures.”

People have an important role to play in monitoring for WNV and protecting themselves and their loved ones.

Avoid Mosquito Bites

- **Be Aware of Peak Mosquito Hours** – The hours from dusk to dawn are peak biting times for many mosquitoes. Consider rescheduling outdoor activities that occur during evening or early morning. Otherwise, take extra care to use repellent and protective clothing.
- **Clothing Can Help** reduce mosquito bites. Although it may be difficult to do when it’s hot, wearing long-sleeves, long pants and socks when outdoors will help keep mosquitoes away from your skin.
- **Apply Insect Repellent** when you go outdoors. Use a repellent with **DEET** (N, N-diethyl-m-toluamide), **permethrin**, **picaridin** (KBR 3023), or **oil of lemon eucalyptus** [p-methane 3, 8-diol (PMD)] according to the instructions on the product label. DEET products should not be

used on infants under two months of age and should be used in concentrations of 30% or less on older children. Oil of lemon eucalyptus should not be used on children under three years of age.

Mosquito-Proof Your Home

- **Drain Standing Water** – Mosquitoes lay their eggs in standing water. Limit the number of places around your home for mosquitoes to breed by either draining or getting rid of items that hold water. Check rain gutters and drains. Empty any unused flowerpots and wading pools, and change water in birdbaths frequently.
- **Install or Repair Screens** – Some mosquitoes like to come indoors. Keep them outside by having tightly-fitting screens on all of your windows and doors.

Report Dead Birds

- **Dead Crows, Blue Jays or Robins** may be a sign that WNV is circulating among the birds and mosquitoes in an area. Call 1-866-MASS-WNV to report a dead bird. By reporting dead birds, you can play an important role in monitoring WNV.

More information is available on the [DPH website](#). Information about WNV and EEE is also available by calling the DPH recorded information line at 1-866-MASS-WNV (1-866-627-7698).

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