

## MEDIA RELEASE



Date: May 1, 2019  
To: All Media  
From: LaSalle County Health Department  
717 Etna Road  
Ottawa, IL 61350  
Contact: Jenny Barrie (ext. 74315)  
Leslie Dougherty (ext. 74314)  
Phone: (815) 433-3366  
**For Immediate Release**

---

### “Health Department Begins Dead Bird Surveillance”

**Ottawa, IL** – The LaSalle County Health Department will begin collecting dead birds on May 1, 2019 and will continue this process until October 15, 2019. Dead birds are important sentinels for early detection of West Nile virus activity. West Nile virus generally appears in birds and mosquitoes before it is transmitted to humans. Over the past seventeen years, West Nile virus activity has been documented throughout LaSalle County. If you find a dead bird, please contact the Health Department’s Environmental Health Division at 815-433-3366. Below is the criteria the Health Department uses to determine if a bird is eligible to submit for testing:

1. The bird is dead, but the carcass is in good condition. Birds should be dead no more than about 48 hours prior to collection, and should not show signs of advanced decomposition (maggots, strong odor, dried or deflated eyes).
2. The bird shows no sign it died of causes other than disease. Birds with obvious injuries such as wounds or missing parts should not be submitted for testing. Likewise, crushed carcasses and birds found along roadways are not acceptable.
3. The bird must be one that is acceptable for testing. At this time the Health Department is **only** collecting **crows, blue jays, and robins**. To help identify the type of bird, please visit our website at [www.lasallecounty.org](http://www.lasallecounty.org) for bird identification information.

As in past years, Health Department staff is getting ready to begin testing mosquitoes for West Nile virus. The mosquito collection and testing equipment was purchased with grant money. The Health

Department also utilized the grant money to purchase a large quantity of mosquito larvicide, which is used to treat potential mosquito breeding sites. The larvicide has been distributed to licensed mosquito control applicators from local municipalities and villages throughout the county. Also, during the spring and summer months, Health Department staff extend outreach efforts to all city, municipal, village, and township officials in the county. Information on available educational brochures were distributed to local hospitals, medical centers, nursing homes, pharmacies, veterinary clinics, pet shelters, campgrounds, daycares, libraries, and pool supply companies. For additional information on West Nile virus, please contact the LaSalle County Health Department at 815-433-3366 or visit our website at [www.lasallecounty.org](http://www.lasallecounty.org).

###

