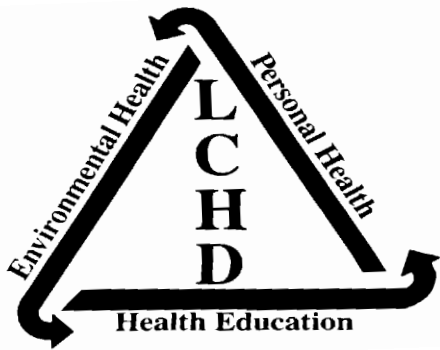


MEDIA RELEASE



Date: May 20, 2021
To: All Media
From: LaSalle County Health Department
717 Etna Road
Ottawa, IL 61350
Contact: Jenny Barrie (ext. 74315)
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For Immediate Release

“Health Department Begins Dead Bird Surveillance”

Ottawa, IL – While mosquitoes have not been shown to transmit COVID-19, they can transmit other diseases such as West Nile virus, St. Louis encephalitis virus, and La Crosse encephalitis virus. While spending time outdoors, please remember to wear an EPA-registered insect repellent to help prevent mosquito bites.

The LaSalle County Health Department has begun collecting dead birds and will continue this process until October 15, 2021. 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 nineteen 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. Listed 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 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 will be distributed to licensed mosquito control applicators from local municipalities and villages throughout the county.

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.

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