

# **Wetlands Park Employee Information: West Nile Virus**

*Please route media inquiries to the Clark County Health District Public Information Office:*

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## **Talking Points:**

### **What is West Nile Virus?**

West Nile virus is a potentially serious viral disease that affects humans, birds, horses and mosquitoes. Experts believe West Nile virus is established as a seasonal epidemic in North America that flares up in the summer and continues into the fall.

### **Who gets West Nile Virus?**

Anyone living in an area where virus activity has been identified is at risk for West Nile virus infection.

### **How does West Nile Virus spread?**

West Nile virus is most often spread by the bite of an infected mosquito. Mosquitoes are West Nile virus carriers that become infected when they feed on infected birds. Infected mosquitoes can then spread West Nile virus to humans and other animals when they bite. West Nile virus is not spread from person-to-person.

### **How can West Nile Virus infection be prevented?**

The easiest and best way to avoid West Nile virus is to prevent mosquito bites:

- When you are outdoors, use insect repellents. The most effective repellents contain DEET (N, N-diethyl-meta-toluamide). However, repellents containing the chemical picaridin or oil of lemon eucalyptus also provide long-lasting protection against mosquito bites. Check the packaging for a list of active ingredients, and directions on proper use.
- Wear pants and long-sleeved shirts, when outdoors.
- Avoid spending time outside when mosquitoes are most active, notably at dusk (the first two hours after sunset) and dawn.
- Eliminate areas of standing water, including bird baths and un-maintained swimming pools, which support mosquito breeding.

### **How is West Nile Virus being addressed in Clark County?**

The Southern Nevada Health District Environmental Health Division, in collaboration with the Nevada State Health Division, is conducting surveillance to monitor for West Nile virus. There are two categories of surveillance currently underway: dead bird testing (crows, ravens and magpies) and mosquito testing.

For additional information the public may call the Southern Nevada Health District's mosquito control hotline at (702) 759-1220 or visit [www.SouthernNevadaHealthDistrict.org](http://www.SouthernNevadaHealthDistrict.org).

### **Wetlands Park Specific Points:**

1. In Wetlands Park, the following mosquito research and control activities are ongoing:
  - Researchers trap adult mosquitoes to keep track of the numbers and species of mosquitoes in the Park.
  - Any pools of stagnant water located are treated with larvicide to kill mosquito larvae.
  - Mosquito predators are encouraged in the Park. Mosquito fish eat mosquito larvae in the water. Birds, bats and dragonflies eat adult mosquitoes.
  - Water in Nature Preserve ponds and streams is in constant motion, and does not provide habitat for mosquitoes, which breed in stagnant, non-flowing pools of water.
2. Mosquito populations in the Wetlands Park have been monitored since the 1970's. The populations are much smaller today than before construction of the Nature Preserve, with its engineered ponds and enhanced plant communities.