

Test Results as of 9/12/08

New In This Update

- The first human West Nile virus (WNV) cases for 2008 have been identified. Additional WNV positive birds and mosquito pools have been identified in New Jersey. See “Human Testing,” “Avian Testing” and “Mosquito Testing” below.

Human Testing

- To date, there are 2 human cases of WNV in New Jersey.
- The first case is a 65 year old male from Middlesex County. Symptom onset was 8/10 and included fever, headache, stiff neck, myalgia, altered mental status and rigidity in the upper and lower extremities. Case was hospitalized for nine days in August and has since recovered.
- The second case is a 73 year old male from Burlington County. Symptom onset was 8/22 with fever, headache, chills, rash, altered mental status, muscle weakness and frequent falls from muscle weakness. Case was hospitalized on 8/25 and has since expired.
- Human testing for WNV is continuing at the New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services Public Health and Environmental Laboratory (PHEL) in Trenton and at public health labs in other states.

Avian Testing

- To date, 131 birds have been received for testing at the Department of Health and Senior Services PHEL. Of those tested, 34 birds have been confirmed positive for the presence of WNV from the following counties: Atlantic (1), Burlington (5), Cumberland (2), Hunterdon (3), Mercer (4), Middlesex (1), Monmouth(1), Morris (6), Ocean (10) and Union (1).

Mosquito Testing

- To date, 5,681 mosquito pools have been tested for the presence of WNV at the New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services PHEL. A total of 477 positive pools have been identified in the following counties: Atlantic (7), Bergen (119), Camden (12), Cumberland (6), Essex (30), Gloucester (39), Hudson (54), Hunterdon (3), Mercer (28), Middlesex (42), Monmouth (24), Morris (30), Ocean (10), Passaic (28), Somerset (12), Sussex (4) and Union (29).
- The Cape May Department of Mosquito Control Bio-safety Level 3 (BSL3) Laboratory is also testing mosquito pools for the presence of WNV. A total of 3 positive pools have been identified in Cape May County.

Horse Testing

- To date, no horse has tested positive for the presence of WNV. Equine testing is conducted by the New Jersey Department of Agriculture's animal health laboratory in Trenton and positive results are sent to the National Veterinary Services Lab (NVSL) in Ames, Iowa for confirmation. For more information, visit the Department of Agriculture web site at www.state.nj.us/agriculture.

Additional Information & Advisories

- The risk of WNV infection persists throughout the fall and people should continue taking steps to eliminate mosquito-breeding areas around their homes and protect themselves and their families from infection.
- Among the personal precautions residents can take now are such measures as eliminating standing water on their own property (such as clearing clogged gutters, draining flower pots, recycling old car tires, etc.), and repairing window and door screens. In the spring, summer, and fall residents can spray insect repellent on their clothing and exposed skin in accordance with labeling directions, wear long sleeved shirts and pants when outdoors, or curb outdoor activities at dawn, dusk and during the evening.
- The West Nile virus, an arboviral disease, is transmitted through the bite of a mosquito that has picked up the virus by feeding on an infected bird. WNV is not directly transmitted from birds to humans. WNV infection generally causes no symptoms or just mild, flu-like symptoms; however, the elderly are at higher risk of more severe disease.
- In New Jersey, a total of 92 people have been diagnosed with WNV between 1999 and 2008. Lab testing confirmed WNV infection in these residents, with five resulting fatalities. WNV activity (identified from avian, equine and/or mosquito surveillance) has been detected in every county in New Jersey.
- New Jersey's WNV surveillance, control and prevention activities involve the coordinated efforts of a number of federal, state and local agencies. These include the New Jersey Departments of Health and Senior Services, Environmental Protection, and Agriculture, the CDC, the State Mosquito Control Commission, the Rutgers Center for Vector Biology, and local health and mosquito control agencies.

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