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For Immediate Release

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KANKAKEE COUNTY BIRDS POSITIVE FOR WEST NILE VIRUS

The Kankakee County Health Department announces that three crows, found in the Bradley, Bourbonnais and Manteno areas, have tested positive for West Nile virus (WNV). To date, Kankakee County has two positive mosquito batches and no human cases of WNV.

WNV is transmitted through the bite of a mosquito that has picked up the virus by feeding on an infected bird. Most people with the virus have no clinical symptoms of illness, but some may become ill three to 15 days after the bite of an infected mosquito. Only about two people in 10 who are bitten by an infected mosquito will experience any illness. Illness from WNV is usually mild and includes fever, headache and body aches, but serious illness, such as encephalitis and meningitis, and death are possible.

“The recent extreme heat and drought conditions,” said Bonnie Schaafsma, Administrator of the Kankakee County Health Department “are anticipated to increase WNV activity across the state. It is important for residents to protect themselves from WNV by reducing the number of mosquitoes around your home and taking personal precautions to avoid mosquito bites”.

Kankakee County Health Department recommends practicing the three “Rs” - reduce, repel and report. **REDUCE** exposure - avoid being outdoors when mosquitoes are most active, especially between dusk and dawn.

- Make sure doors and windows have tight-fitting screens. Repair or replace screens that have tears or other openings. Try to keep doors and windows shut, especially at night.

- Eliminate all sources of standing water where mosquitoes can breed, including water in bird baths, ponds, flowerpots, wading pools, old tires and any other receptacles.

REPEL- When outdoors, wear shoes and socks, long pants and a long-sleeved shirt, and apply insect repellent that contains DEET, picaridin, oil of lemon eucalyptus or IR3535, according to label instructions. Consult a physician before using repellents on infants.

REPORT- The Health Department is monitoring freshly (less than 24 hours) dead birds, such as crows, blue jays, robins, cardinals or mourning doves. The birds must not show any signs of decay or trauma. To report a dead bird, call (815) 802-9410. Be prepared to give the location, date, and time you found the dead bird.

For more information see: <http://www.idph.state.il.us/envhealth/wnvsurveillance12.htm>

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