



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
August 21, 2024

West Nile Virus Positive Mosquito Sample in Flora

Clay County Health Department collected a West Nile virus positive mosquito sample on August 21, 2024 from Flora in Clay County. This is the first West Nile virus (WNV) positive mosquito sample collected in Clay County this season.

As previously reported, Clay County Health Department received notice on June 28, 2024 that a submitted bird specimen tested positive for WNV. The bird was collected on June 10th in Flora and submitted for testing at the University of Illinois Diagnostic Laboratory.

Confirmation of a WNV positive mosquito sample means that the virus is circulating in the community and there is a heightened risk of infection for humans. Residents are urged to take the necessary precautions to protect themselves from mosquito bites. It is important to remember the three **R**'s – **reduce** your exposure to mosquitoes, **repel** them by wearing insect repellent, and **report** areas where mosquitoes typically breed.

WNV is transmitted to humans through the bite of an infected mosquito. Mosquitoes pick up the virus by feeding on infected birds. The illness is not spread from person-to-person. Most people infected with West Nile virus show no symptoms. However, some people may experience fever, nausea, headache, and muscle aches. Symptoms may last from a few days to a few weeks. In rare cases, severe illness including meningitis or encephalitis, or even death, can occur. People older than 50 are at higher risk for severe illness from West Nile virus.

Because WNV generally appears and spreads in Illinois bird and mosquito populations as early as two to six weeks before it is transmitted to humans, monitoring the bird and mosquito populations in our communities helps us predict when humans will be at risk for WNV infection. Surveillance activities in Clay County include laboratory tests on mosquito batches, the submission of dead crows, blue jays, robins, and other perching birds for testing, and responding to concerns of mosquito production sites.

If you would like more information on West Nile virus, contact the Clay County Health Department at 662-4406 or visit our website www.healthdept.org.

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