Animal Case Surveillance
Horses with encephalitis are routinely tested for WNV, WEE, and other mosquito transmitted diseases. Animal owners should consult a veterinarian if their animal is ill.

Dead Bird and Dead Tree Squirrel Surveillance
California began to test dead crows and related birds for WNV in 2000 and included dead tree squirrels in 2004. Reporting dead birds and dead tree squirrels helps identify where the virus is active in California. In 2006, WNV positive dead birds were found in 53 counties in California. State agencies, private organizations, and individuals participate in the surveillance program by reporting dead birds and dead tree squirrels.

WEST NILE VIRUS PREVENTION & CONTROL
To decrease exposure to mosquitoes and the infections they may carry:

- Eliminate all sources of standing water on your property to reduce mosquito breeding.
- Avoid spending time outside at dawn and dusk when mosquitoes are most active.
- Apply insect repellent containing DEET, picaridin, or oil of lemon eucalyptus according to label instructions when you go outside.
- Make sure that doors and windows have tight fitting screens. Repair or replace screens that have tears or holes.
- Contact your local mosquito and vector control agency if there is a significant mosquito problem where you live or work.

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I SEE A DEAD BIRD OR TREE SQUIRREL?
If you find a dead bird, particularly a crow, jay, magpie, raven, sparrow, finch, or raptor, or dead tree squirrel; please file an online report at www.westnile.ca.gov or call toll-free 1-877-WNV-BIRD. Dead bird and dead tree squirrel reports are very important because they are usually the first indication of the virus in an area, and allow the CDPH to monitor the virus throughout the year.

If the bird or tree squirrel does not meet the criteria for testing, it will not be picked-up and can be disposed of in an outside garbage can. Do not handle the animal with your bare hands. Use a shovel, gloves, or inverted plastic bags to handle the animal, place it in a plastic bag, then dispose of it in the trash.

WHAT IS THE CALIFORNIA WEST NILE SURVEILLANCE PROGRAM?
The California Department of Public Health (CDPH) has coordinated a statewide mosquito-borne encephalitis surveillance program since 1969 to detect western equine encephalitis (WEE), St. Louis encephalitis (SLE), and other viruses. In 2000, CDPH and other agencies expanded the program to enhance the state’s ability to detect WNV. Reporting and testing of dead birds and tree squirrels was added to the existing California surveillance system, which includes encephalitis case detection, mosquito testing, and monitoring of sentinel chickens.

Human Case Surveillance
Individuals who are experiencing symptoms of WNV should contact their health care provider or clinic. The California Department of Public Health and local public health departments provide WNV testing. Health care providers should contact their local public health department to discuss testing requirements or visit www.westnile.ca.gov for more information.

Mosquito Testing
Mosquitoes throughout the state are collected and tested for the presence of WNV, WEE, and SLE viruses. Local mosquito and vector control agencies also monitor the abundance and type of mosquitoes.

Sentinel Chicken Testing
Over 200 chicken flocks are strategically placed throughout the state and are tested routinely during the mosquito season to detect evidence of infection from WNV, WEE, or SLE viruses. Chickens do not get sick from these viruses.

For More Information on West Nile Virus or to Report a Dead Bird or Dead Tree Squirrel visit:
www.westnile.ca.gov or call 1-877-WNV-BIRD

THE CALIFORNIA WEST NILE VIRUS SURVEILLANCE SYSTEM
For more information: www.westnile.ca.gov or 1-877-WNV-BIRD
California Department of Public Health Vector-Borne Disease Section Sacramento, CA (916) 552-9730 www.cdph.ca.gov
An infected mosquito can bite any animal, but not all animals will become sick. The disease most often affects birds but may occasionally cause disease in other animals.

**Birds**
Wild birds serve as the main source of virus for mosquitoes. Infection has been reported in more than 225 bird species. Although many birds that are infected with WNV will not appear ill, WNV infection can cause serious illness and death in some birds. The most severe illnesses are seen among the corvid birds, which include crows, jays, ravens, and magpies.

**Squirrels**
Tree squirrels can contract WNV from mosquito bites. Symptoms include uncoordinated movement, paralysis, circling, lethargy, and death. Infection has been reported in western gray, eastern gray, and fox squirrels in many regions of California.

**Horses**
Like people, most horses bitten by mosquitoes will not become sick with WNV. However, of those that do, clinical signs may include stumbling, circling, hind leg weakness, inability to stand, muscle tremors, and death. A vaccine to prevent WNV infection in horses is available. Horse owners should consult with a veterinarian about WNV vaccine and other vaccines against mosquito-borne diseases, such as western equine encephalitis.

**Dogs and Cats**
Dogs and cats can be exposed to WNV in the same way as humans. However, these animals are very resistant to WNV and very rarely become ill. Concerned pet owners should consult with a veterinarian.

**West Nile virus (WNV)** is a mosquito-borne virus commonly found in Africa, Asia, the Middle East and, since 1999, in North America. WNV was first detected in southern California in 2003 and has since spread to all 58 counties. Current information on WNV activity in California can be found on our website at: www.westnile.ca.gov.