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## WNV positive birds found in Oakville, Milton, and Burlington

The Halton Region Health Department has received confirmation that four birds have tested positive for West Nile virus (WNV). One crow was found in the area of Trafalgar Road and Lakeshore Road in Oakville and a second crow was found in the area of Ontario Street and Derry Road in Milton. These are the first confirmed cases of WNV in birds for Oakville and Milton. A blue jay and a crow were found in Aldershot and south Burlington, respectively.

"While West Nile virus activity in south Burlington is continuing at higher levels than elsewhere in Halton, these new results show that the virus is being found throughout Halton," said Dr. Monir Taha, Associate Medical Officer of Health for Halton Region. "I would like to emphasize that all Halton residents, especially older adults and elderly persons, should take extra precautions to protect themselves against mosquito bites during the high risk months of August and September."

The Health Department continues weekly monitoring and treating of standing water sites. In addition, three out of four rounds of applying larvicide to catch basins in Halton have been completed.

### Halton WNV surveillance summary 2005

	Burlington	Oakville	Halton Hills	Milton
• Positive crows	4	1	0	1
• Positive Blue Jays	1	0	0	0
• Positive mosquito pools	1	0	0	0
• Human cases	0	0	0	0
• Larvicide applications to standing water	16	25	18	22

Mosquitoes can transmit WNV to humans after becoming infected by feeding on the blood of birds carrying the virus. The following are steps that residents can take to protect themselves and their families from WNV:

- Avoid areas with high mosquito populations.
- Wear light-coloured, loose fitting, tightly-woven clothing, including long sleeves, pants, socks and a hat, to cover exposed skin when outdoors from early evening to morning, or any time when in wooded areas.
- Use a mosquito repellent approved by Health Canada's Pest Management Regulatory Agency.
- Make sure all windows and doors in your home have screens that are in good condition.
- Take extra precautions from dusk to dawn when mosquito activity is particularly high.

Also, to reduce mosquito breeding areas around your home:

- Drain any areas of standing water on your property.
- Remove old tires.
- Turn over pails, toys, and wheelbarrows that may collect water.
- Change the water in birdbaths weekly.
- Keep your eavestroughs clear to avoid trapped water.

Maps showing the locations of positive birds, as well as standing water sites and catch basins where larvicide has been applied are available on the Health Department's website at [www.region.halton.on.ca/health](http://www.region.halton.on.ca/health)

To report a dead bird or standing water or for more information about West Nile virus, please call the Halton Region Health Department at 905-825-6000, toll free 1-866-4HALTON (1-866-442-5866), TTY 905-827-9833.

## Barry and the Straycats

New website dedicated to helping stray animals

By MANDI HARGRAVE

Strays.ca is a haven for forgotten animals. It was started six years ago as a place where owners could locate their lost pets and now it is being used as a way to raise funds for animal shelters. Barry Tuddenham, creator of Strays.ca said the website was started to help the local situation in Fergus and help everyone across the board. "Once my eyes were opened to the terrible plight of many stray animals, I had no choice," said Tuddenham. "It started off with dogs, but when I found out how hard cats have it, I started to concentrate there."

The idea for strays.ca came from realizing what a local dogcatcher had been doing.

"He was selling dogs to research before the three day time period required by law was up," said Tuddenham. "Cats were totally ignored. He ended up being the first person ever charged under the OMAFRA (Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs) laws governing dogcatchers, and we managed to get the husband of a local vet installed in the position. In the process of fighting him, I started Strays."

He also started a company called Strays Ornamental Concrete about three years ago. Artists from around the world send him pieces of their art that he sells and donates the money to charities. He makes pieces from concrete as well, for Canada's climate. "Lately, the market has been flooded with Chinese imports not made for this climate, and they start to break down after a year or so. Concrete made the right way lasts forever,"

Tuddenham said. "I also make works in a unique medium I developed by luck, using sand of various colours and a resin as a bonding agent."

Tuddenham sells unique sculpture products to help raise money for fundraising through his eBay store, Aaanimalaid.

"I make all the items at Strays Ornamental Concrete. Other things have been donated. I hope to get going more with the donations now that I have the eBay store as an avenue for sales. Cats Anonymous (a registered charity) has agreed to provide a tax receipt for any donations that sell for over \$25."

"We sell a huge array of great works of art at very reasonable prices. Any art lover or gardener can find that special piece and feel good in the knowledge that they are helping stray animals," he said.

He said that he loves art and animals and decided this would be a good way to combine them to help each one.

"Pets are not disposable! Unfortunately, some people tend to think that they are, and drop off their unwanted pets when they become inconvenient, either at a humane society, or worse, at the side of the road," said Tuddenham. "One young female cat could be responsible for over half a million descendents in her lifetime. Of course, most die, but what horrible deaths many face. Most shelters and rescue groups are bursting at the seams and need help. Most need finances to help fund spay/neuter programs. We hope to offer them a way of obtaining funds. Those that care can help make up for the horrible situation caused by an uncaring few."

## Its goose was cooked!

By ANN KORNUKA

Last Tuesday, August 9th, Campbellville's hydro went down in some areas for a few hours after a Canada goose strayed into the power lines. The navigationally challenged flyer dive-bombed a power line and lost. The bird hit a transformer, which promptly caught fire. Hydro crews rushed to the scene, only to find the transformer burnt out and the unfortunate goose lying by the hydro lines.



PHOTO BY MANDI HARGRAVE

Cecil Wells from Paris performs a plowing demonstration with his two Belgian draft horses during the scorching heat at the Heavy Horse Field Days event at Country Heritage park.

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