

Crow found in Milton tests positive for West Nile virus

Another dead crow discovered in rural Milton has tested positive for West Nile virus.

The bird, found just south of Acton, was tested by the Canadian Co-operative Wildlife Health Centre in Guelph and was confirmed to be carrying the disease Wednesday.

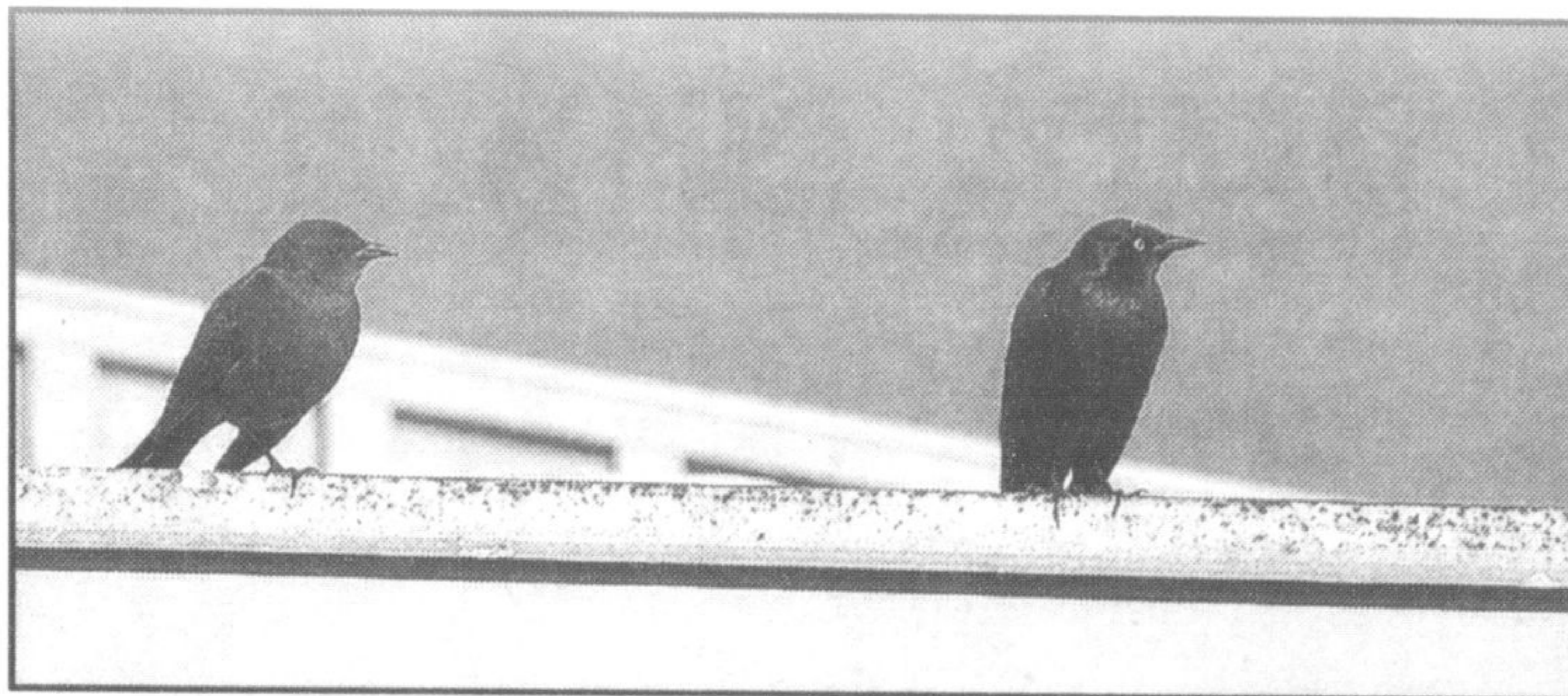
This is the third positive bird to turn up in Milton this season, the other two found June 1 in the rural area west of Regional Road 25.

"Through the health department's surveillance program, we're beginning to see more West Nile virus activity in Halton," said Halton Medical Officer of Health Bob Nosal.

Two more crows recently found in Burlington also tested positive for West Nile.

The Halton Region Health Department recommends the following steps for residents to protect themselves against the disease:

- Avoid areas with high mosquito populations.
- Wear light-coloured clothing, including long sleeves, pants and a hat, to cover exposed skin when outdoors in the evening or early morning.
- Use a mosquito repellent approved by 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



West Nile has been found in more than 150 North American bird species, most commonly the crow.

dusk to dawn when mosquito activity is particularly high.

"We know that the virus is here in Halton, so now is really the time when people have to be serious about protecting themselves and their family," said Halton Health Protection Services Director Peter Willmott.

The health department also asks residents to reduce mosquito breeding areas on their properties by draining any standing or stagnant water, removing old tires, turning over pails, toys, and wheelbarrows that may collect water, changing birdbath water every few days and keeping eaves troughs clear to avoid trapped water.

Across the region, 1,482 dead birds have been recorded by the health department this season, 182 in Milton.

Last year, 4,584 dead birds were reported altogether, 358 locally. Of those, 15 were confirmed to carry West Nile virus, with only two of

them being in Milton.

Two horses and four mosquito pools in the area also tested positive for the disease.

In an effort to prevent West Nile, the Region has been applying larvicide to catch basins in Halton, reducing the number of adult mosquitoes that can transmit the disease.

So far, 83 standing water sites in Halton have had a larvicide treatment, 27 of those being in Milton. This is up from the 12 sites larviced in town in 2003.

The Region also has the Wilderness Group on-call to apply adulticide, a chemical that will kill adult mosquitoes potentially carrying the disease, if Mr. Nosal deems it necessary.

To report a dead bird or stagnant water, or for more information about West Nile virus, call the Halton Region Health Department at (905) 825-6000 or visit www.region.halton.on.ca/health.

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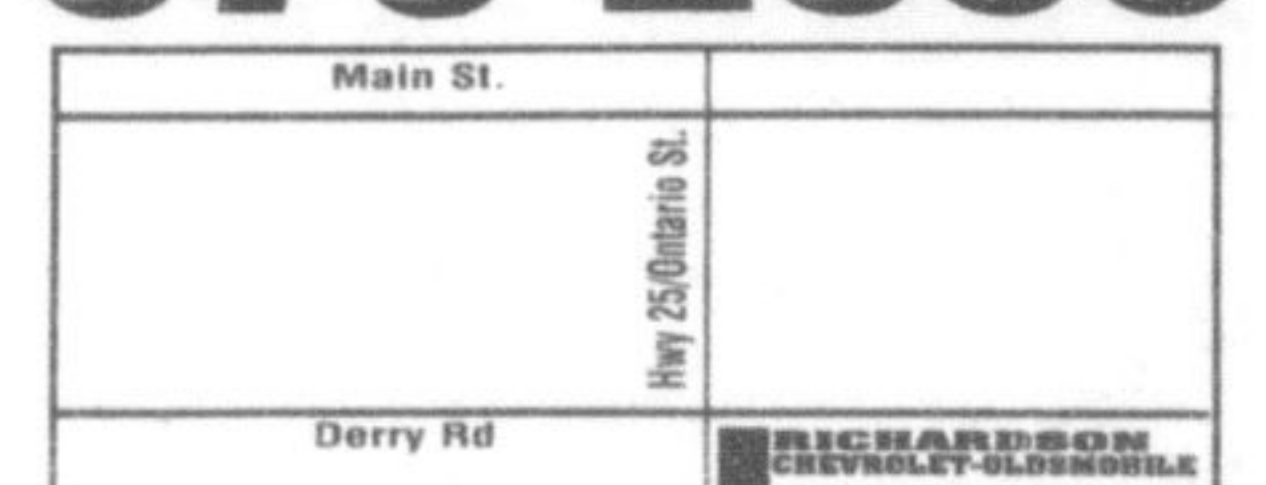
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