

West Nile virus still threat

Milton has its first reported bird infected with West Nile virus (WNV) of 2008.

The Canadian Co-operative Wildlife Health Centre in Guelph has confirmed that a dead crow — picked up by the Halton Region Health Department September 8 — has tested positive for WNV. It was found in the Ontario Street and Steeles Avenue area.

The finding comes on the heels of two Burlington birds and two Oakville batches of mosquitoes testing positive. So far this year, 13 birds across the region — eight in Oakville, four in Burlington and one in Milton — have been found to have the disease. Four WNV-positive batches of mosquitoes have been confirmed, all in Oakville.

Those numbers mark an increase over this time last year, although to date there have been no reports of humans being infected in Halton.

"Many mosquitoes become less active at temperatures below 15 degrees C., but at this time of year there are still plenty of nights with temperatures above 15," said Dr. Monir Taha, associate medical officer of health for Halton Region. "Until we have had a few heavy frosts, I would encourage everyone to continue to prevent mosquitoes from biting."

In order to do so, the Region's health department reminds residents to practice the following precautionary measures this fall.

- Cover up. Wear light-coloured, long-sleeved shirts and pants with tightly-woven fabric.

- Use an approved insect repellent, such as one containing DEET.

- Limit your time outdoors from dusk to dawn. This is when mosquitoes — which can carry and transmit WNV after

feeding on the blood of infected birds — are most active and likely to bite.

- Keep mosquitoes out of your home with well-maintained window and door screening.

- Reduce mosquito breeding sites around your home by getting rid of all water-filled containers and objects. Change the water in bird baths at least once a week.

Maps showing the location of WNV positive birds, as well as standing water sites that have had larvicide applied, are available on the health department's website at www.halton.ca/wnv

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To report a dead bird or standing water, or for more information about WNV, call Halton Region at (905) 825-6000, TTY (905) 827-9833 or e-mail wvn@halton.ca.

Hit-and-run death trial delayed

The trial of a man charged in the hit-and-run death of a Milton high school student has been delayed.

Stephen Alchin, 34, of Halton Hills was scheduled to appear at Superior Court of Justice in Milton starting Monday for a two-week trial.

But his lawyer, Paul Stunt, was injured and the case was put over to a date that's still undetermined.

Alchin has been charged with dangerous driving causing death and failing to stop at the scene of an accident following the death of 18-year-old Lauren Cooper, a student at Milton District High School.

Cooper was rollerblading the night of July 13, 2006 on Second Line, just north of No. 15 Sideroad, when she was struck and killed by a vehicle.

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Map showing location at 801 Main Street E., Milton, Ont.

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