

work, utilized the media and workshops to build awareness of the problem and encourage the implementation of solutions.

As a professor of Biology at U.P.E.I., Daryl has taught and encouraged a generation of biologists in the fields of wildlife biology, ornithology, mammalogy, and other subjects. Some of these individuals now are in a position to contribute funds towards conservation and, in some instances, to develop and write policy for program implementation or to teach the next generation.

In the spring of 1999, Daryl's many decades of efforts led to his nomination for and receipt of the Island Nature Trust's 20th Anniversary *Special Natural Areas Award*. His efforts continue today.

WEST NILE VIRUS ADVISORY:

by Dr. Pierre Daoust
Canadian Cooperative Wildlife Health Centre

Bird watchers, naturalists, outdoors people, wildlife biologists, wildlife rehabilitators and other members of the public should be alert to unusual deaths of wild birds, particularly crows, during spring and summer 2000. Such deaths may indicate that West Nile Virus, first recognized in North America in 1999, is active in Canada. On Prince Edward Island, dead birds should be submitted to the Atlantic Veterinary College, UPEI, (see bottom of this notice), which is the local Canadian Cooperative Wildlife Health Centre (CCWHC) regional office. Here the specimens can be examined for West Nile Virus infection. This is an important part of the early-warning system in place to detect West Nile Virus activity in Canada, in order to reduce the risk of human infection

What is West Nile Virus and why is it cause for concern?

- o West Nile Virus is an arbovirus (arthropod-borne virus), transmitted by the bites of infected arthropods, mainly mosquitoes (at least 43 species worldwide) and, to a lesser extent, ticks. Direct transmission from animal-to-animal, or animal-to-human, does not occur naturally.
- o Prior to 1999, West Nile Virus was known only from Africa, Asia and Europe, and had never been found in the Western Hemisphere.
- o Wild birds are the primary hosts, but the virus may also infect amphibians, domestic poultry, domestic mammals, human beings, and non-human primates.
- o The virus multiplies in the tissues of an infected bird, circulates in the blood, and may be picked up by another mosquito taking a blood meal. Infected mosquitoes transmit the virus when they feed on another bird. Most birds do not become ill when infected with this virus, but about 20 species of birds are known to be susceptible to disease.
- o Individuals of certain species of mammals, especially people and horses, also may develop encephalitis (inflammation of the brain) due to West Nile Virus, although most infected people and horses remain asymptomatic.
- o In humans, West Nile Virus may cause mild disease with fever, frontal headache, muscle aches, swollen lymph nodes and skin rash. Less commonly, it causes severe disease that is marked by headache, fever, neck stiffness, muscle weakness, stupor, disorientation, coma, and death. Disease is usually more severe in the elderly. The incubation period (interval between infection and the onset of disease) in humans is usually 5 to 15 days.

