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California West Nile Virus Surveillance Project

Dead Bird Reporting Protocol

The first human cases of West Nile Virus in California were detected in Southern California in 2003. The public has played an important role in California and throughout the country in tracking the spread of the virus which originally appeared in the U.S. in New York in 1999. Birds play an important role in maintaining and spreading the virus. Mosquitoes acquire the virus from infected birds, and then transmit the virus to people. Evidence of the virus in dead birds is often the first indication of West Nile Virus introduced into a new region.

You are encouraged to assist in the efforts to detect and monitor WNV by calling the California Department of Health Services West Nile Virus Hotline at 877-WNV-BIRD (877-968-2473) if you find a crow, raven, magpie, jay or raptor that appears to have been dead for a day. You may also report the bird on-line at: <http://westnile.ca.gov/> Note the birds' location and condition. Do not attempt to handle the bird. If the bird is in Solano County and is determined to meet the criteria for testing, the state DHS will refer the information to the Solano County Mosquito Abatement District for pick up and shipping to the Animal Health Laboratory in Davis. Birds not picked up by 5:00 pm on the date reported can be safely discarded in the trash after double bagging (wear gloves when handling the carcass).