

Help Prevent West Nile Virus in Animals & Humans



Situation: When summer arrives, there are picnics, parades, sunshine and... mosquitoes! West Nile Virus (WNV) is a mosquito-borne disease that originated in east-central Africa and suddenly appeared in the US in 1999.

Mosquitos contact the virus by feeding on infected birds. The virus is then spread to humans and other animals when they are bitten by an infected mosquito. Among humans, about one in five people who are bitten by an infected mosquito will become ill, and our elderly and immune-compromised family members and friends may be even more susceptible to serious illness.

FAQs & Humane Solutions:

“What species of birds are affected by this virus?”

The birds people most often bring to us suffering from WNV are crows, jays, hawks and owls. The disease proves to be fatal for many of the crows it infects, but some of the sickened jays and birds of prey can be saved with proper care by a licensed wildlife rehabilitator.

“What are the signs or symptoms in sick birds?”

Symptoms of WNV in birds may include weakness, lethargy, inability to fly, balance problems (e.g. falling over) and seizures.

“What can I do to help protect birds & humans from this virus in my neighborhood?”

You can help protect wild birds and humans by preventing mosquitoes from breeding on your property. This is accomplished by eliminating standing water, which mosquitoes need to breed. Consider the following:



◀ American Crow

Great Horned Owl receiving treatment at our wildlife hospital ▶



◀ Standing water in a wheelbarrow in a suburban yard

Standing water in an old tire ▶



- Mosquito eggs can hatch in as little as four days, so **change the water in bird baths** at least twice a week.
- **Clean out your home's gutters** to keep them from holding standing water.
- Eliminate standing water in flowerpot bases, old tires, buckets, watering cans, wheelbarrows and swimming pool covers.
- Eliminate pools of standing water in your yard by **correcting landscaping/drainage problems**.
- **Aerate** ornamental ponds or pools.
- Take a walking tour of your yard every couple of days in the summer to look for and eliminate additional places that contain standing water.

“What should I do if I find a sick bird?”

Please refer to our Injured Birds instruction page at <http://www.wihumane.org/wildlife/injuredbirds.aspx>

“What should I do if I find a dead bird that I think might have died from WNV?”

You can call the Dead Bird Reporting Hotline at 1-800-433-1610.

“Where can I learn more about WNV?”

To learn more about West Nile Virus, visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website at www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/westnile/index.htm.

*Horses are susceptible to West Nile Virus. Horse owners: Talk to your veterinarian about having your horse vaccinated against WNV. Please visit http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/westnile/qa/wnv_horses.htm to learn more about West Nile Virus and horses.

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The Wisconsin Humane Society is a charitable organization that depends entirely on donations to fulfill its mission to create a community that values animals and treats them with respect and kindness. Your support for the WHS Wildlife Rehabilitation Center makes possible the distribution of information like this to thousands of people who request it each year, and makes possible the humane care of over 5,000 injured, sick, and orphaned wild animals from our community each year. You may donate online at www.wihumane.org/donate.aspx or by mailing a check to the following address:

WHS Wildlife Center, 4500 W. Wisconsin Avenue, Milwaukee, WI 53208.



◀ Bird baths should be emptied at least twice a week.

Unclog gutters to eliminate standing water. ▶



◀ Aerate ornamental ponds.

Horses are susceptible to WNV as well and should be vaccinated. ▶

