

BAY COUNTY MOSQUITO CONTROL

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Community Initiatives
Geographic Information Systems
Gypsy Moth Suppression Program
Mosquito Control
Transportation Planning

Press Release

West Nile Virus Found in Bay County Blue Jay

For Immediate Release: July 12, 2019
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Routine disease surveillance conducted by Bay County Mosquito Control has detected the first evidence of West Nile virus (WNV) in a blue jay from the City of Bay City. In response, extensive control efforts have taken place in the area to reduce adult and larval mosquito populations. Mosquito Control staff will continue to monitor WNV until October 1 by testing mosquito samples and dead crows or blue jays. “Bay County has seen West Nile virus-positive birds and mosquitoes nearly every year since 2002. As our program is responding with increased surveillance and control efforts throughout the area, residents are strongly encouraged to take appropriate measures to protect themselves from mosquito bites” said Rebecca Brandt, Bay County Mosquito Control Manager.

WNV is well-established throughout the state, and is transmitted through the bite of a mosquito that has picked up the virus by feeding on an infected bird. Michigan has reported no human cases for the 2019 season. Statistically, only two people in 10 who are bitten by an infected mosquito will experience any illness, which is usually mild and includes fever, headache, and body aches. About one in 150 people suffer serious illness, such as encephalitis and meningitis.

Citizens should call Bay County Mosquito Control at (989) 894-4555 to report dead crows or blue jays. The birds should be dead less than 24 hours and in good condition with no rotting odor or maggots present. If you find a dead bird, don’t handle it with bare hands. Instead, always wear gloves or scoop the bird with a plastic shopping bag. Homeowners may dispose of other dead bird species either in an outside garbage can or by burying the bird.

The best way to prevent WNV or any other mosquito-carried illness is to reduce the number of mosquitoes around your home and take personal precautions to avoid mosquito bites. To further lessen the risk of

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acquiring WNV, follow these recommendations:

- Avoid being outdoors when mosquitoes are most active, especially between dusk and dawn.
- Wear long-sleeved shirts, long pants, and socks when outdoors.
- Apply insect repellent containing DEET, picaridin, oil of lemon eucalyptus, or IR3535 according to label instructions. Consult a physician or visit the CDC website (www.cdc.gov) before applying repellents to infants.
- The *Culex* mosquitoes that transmit WNV often develop in container habitats around the home. Eliminate sources of standing water on property (i.e., wading pools, old tires, buckets, containers) by dumping water when possible to prevent larvae from developing into biting adults.
- Make sure doors and windows have tight-fitting screens.

For more information on WNV and other mosquito-borne diseases, visit the following websites:

- Bay County Health Department www.baycounty-mi.gov/Health/CommunicableDisease.aspx
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/westnile/q&a.htm
- Michigan Department of Health and Human Services www.michigan.gov/mdhhs

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