

FOUR STEPS TO TAKE IF YOU FIND A DEAD BIRD

Dead birds are often the first sign of West Nile virus



Step One

You find a dead bird. What do you do? Here in Contra Costa County, the first step is to call 1-877-WNV-BIRD (1-877-968-2473) or go [online](#) to report the bird to the California West Nile Virus Dead Bird Hotline. As you submit the information, the Hotline operator determines if the bird could be a good candidate for testing.

Step Two

The District receives information about birds deemed suitable for testing soon after the report is submitted. We assign a District employee to pick up the bird.

Step Three

Once the bird arrives at the District, the laboratory staff inspect the bird to determine if the reported information is correct. On occasion, the bird is not the species that was reported and cannot be tested. Most birds, however; are the correct species and can be tested. Our entomologist performs a preliminary test and then sends the bird to U.C. Davis for confirmation of West Nile virus infection. U.C. Davis typically informs the District if the bird had West Nile virus within a week.

Step Four

Once the District receives confirmation that a dead bird was infected with West Nile virus, we post the results on the [District website](#) and District employees [place mosquito traps in the neighborhood](#) near where the bird was reported to collect mosquitoes to test for virus if needed. We increase efforts to find young larval mosquitoes in nearby water sources and we let the person who reported the bird know that the bird tested positive for West Nile virus.

A Few of Your Questions Answered

What Makes a Bird a Good Candidate for Testing?

- The bird is a raven, crow, jay or magpie which is in the Corvid family and is a species that can be susceptible to West Nile virus.

When Will the Bird Get Picked Up?

- Dead birds are often picked up on the same day as the report, but may be picked up the following day if the report reaches the District late in the day.
- There are no bird pickups on weekends or holidays.

What if No One Calls Me Back

- If a District employee picks up the bird, but within a week, no one has called back, the bird may not have been suitable for testing or did not have West Nile virus.

Even in cases when a District employee does not pick up a reported bird, the reports are still very important because they still provide information to help the District conduct prevention and control efforts. Not all birds are tested but all reports are valuable.