



### ***Finding and reporting dead birds***

**Call 1-877 WNV-BIRD  
(1-877-968-2473)**

You can help Humboldt County track West Nile Virus (WNV) by participating in the dead wild bird surveillance program. When you find a dead bird still intact , call the West Nile Dead Bird hotline telephone number listed above. This number is a direct link to the California Department of Health Services switchboard in Richmond, CA. The hotline received over 94,000 calls last year.

All bird species are being tested at this point (Spring , 2005). If two WNV positive birds are confirmed from a specific area ( a Zip-Code for example), then there will be no more need to accept birds from that locale. Crows and ravens are two species most likely to die from WNV infection, and are highly visible.

Any birds that have been dead for less than 48-60 hours can be picked up for testing. Rotting, skeletal, or maggot ridden carcasses won't be picked up. If the dead bird you found is believed fresh enough, please call 1-877-WNV-BIRD.

State Department of Health Services personnel will ask several simple questions and determine if the dead bird is suitable for testing. Next, they notify the Humboldt County Environmental Health Division to pick up the bird. The local health department places the bird on ice and ships overnight express to the UC Davis Laboratory for virus isolation testing. Avoid handling the bird yourself if possible. No one has caught WNV from handling dead birds, but with any wild animal found dead, reasonable caution is called for. For example, wear gloves and put the bird in a plastic bag while waiting for pick-up.

Please note that the 1-877-WNV-BIRD phone number must be called first. The local health department cannot pick up the bird without being dispatched by the state personnel. Test results make take several weeks and are usually passed back to the local health department, who in turn will advise the person submitting the bird. For any questions about the dead bird program or other aspects of West Nile Virus, please call the Environmental Health Division at 445-6215, toll free at 1-800-963-9241, or via e-mail at [bhipp@co.humboldt.ca.us](mailto:bhipp@co.humboldt.ca.us).