



**SNOHOMISH  
HEALTH  
DISTRICT**

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## **Second WNV-positive bird found in Snohomish County** *Virus could “winter over” locally, says Snohomish Health District*

**SNOHOMISH COUNTY**—A second bird collected in Snohomish County has tested positive for West Nile virus (WNV). Snohomish Health District collected the dead Steller’s Jay on October 11 in the city of Snohomish near Blackman Lake. West Nile virus is a bird disease that is transmitted by mosquito bite.

The only other WNV-positive bird in Snohomish County this year was a crow collected on Oct. 2 in southwest Everett. There have been no reported cases of WNV illness in humans or horses in this county so far in 2006. Three confirmed cases of WNV in humans have been reported in Washington this year, and five cases in horses [\[see www.doh.wa.gov for current statistics\]](http://www.doh.wa.gov).

Of the nearly 440 dead birds reported to the countywide public health agency this year, 67 freshly dead and undamaged birds were sent for testing to the state animal laboratory in Pullman.

“These positive birds indicate that West Nile virus has moved into our region,” said Mike Young, health district environmental specialist. “After we got the positive test on our first bird three weeks ago, positive birds were reported about the same time in other counties. This is clear signal for people to protect themselves against mosquito bites.” **[[EDITOR: See sidebar, Page 2]]** He noted that in communities across the nation the risk of human infection goes up within weeks of detecting the virus in birds. Some virus-carrying mosquitoes find shelter in the winter and survive to lay infected eggs in the spring. **[[EDITOR: More detail about this, Page 2]]**

**To report a dead bird, call the Snohomish Health District WNV line at 425.339.8720. Please report only apparently undamaged birds. Find more information at [www.snohd.org](http://www.snohd.org).**

Established in 1959, the Snohomish Health District works for a safer and healthier community through disease prevention, health promotion, and protection from environmental threats. Find more information about the Health District at [www.snohd.org](http://www.snohd.org). **###END main release###**

**MORE...**

**[[SIDEBAR]]**

**Additional detail from *Mike Young, Environmental Specialist, Snohomish Health District:***

Winter may not save us from more West Nile virus (WNV) activity next spring, because the mosquito of most concern, *Culex pipiens*, may keep the virus around all winter. Nicknamed “the house mosquito,” *Culex* is a known WNV carrier and hibernates as an adult. In autumn the *Culex* mosquitoes find shelter in dense brush, burrows, woodpiles, and indoors to escape the cold. In other parts of the country, research has shown that *Culex* mosquitoes who live through the winter will lay eggs in the spring and pass the virus on to the new generation.

Take these measures to reduce exposure to mosquitoes:

- Get rid of old tires and other containers around your home where water can accumulate and serve as a breeding ground for mosquitoes.
- Make sure the screens on all doors and windows are rip-free and working properly.
- Schedule outdoor activities away from dusk and dawn when mosquitoes are most active.
- Use mosquito repellents containing DEET, picaridin, or oil of lemon eucalyptus; follow the directions on the container.
- Wear long-sleeved shirts and long pants when in mosquito-infested areas.

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