

For Immediate Release

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Washtenaw County Bird Tests Positive for West Nile Virus

YPSILANTI, Mich., August 23, 2018 – A crow found in the 48105 zip code has tested positive for West Nile virus. The Washtenaw County Health Department encourages residents to prevent mosquito bites and reduce the potential spread of West Nile.

“We haven’t seen human cases of West Nile in Washtenaw County yet this year, but they are most likely in late August and early September,” says Laura Bauman, epidemiology manager at the Washtenaw County Health Department.

West Nile is a mosquito-borne virus that can cause mild illness (West Nile fever) or severe symptoms (encephalitis or meningitis, an inflammation of the brain) in humans and other animals. West Nile is primarily transmitted through the bite of an infected mosquito. Mosquitoes become infected with West Nile when they feed on infected birds that carry the virus in their blood.

[As of August 15](#), 42 birds have tested positive for West Nile virus in Michigan this year. Metro Detroit and Greater Grand Rapids are seeing increased West Nile activity in mosquitoes.

Follow these tips to keep yourself and your family safe throughout the summer and fall:

- **Eliminate standing water around your home and yard.** Mosquitoes need water to lay eggs. Get rid of old tires, tin cans, buckets, drums, bottles or any water-holding containers. Fill in or drain any low places (puddles, ruts, etc.) in the yard. Keep drains, ditches and culverts free of weeds and trash so water will drain properly. Empty plastic wading pools at least once a week and store indoors when not in use. Unused swimming pools should be drained and kept dry during the mosquito season. Change the water in pet dishes, horse troughs, birdbaths and plant pots or drip trays at least once each week.
- **Fight the bite.** Wear long sleeves, long pants, shoes and socks. Wear insect repellent containing active ingredients approved by the EPA – visit the [EPA's Inspect Repellent Search Tool](#) for help in finding the right insect repellent for your needs. Spray clothing with repellent, as mosquitoes may bite through thin clothing. Read repellent labels carefully and follow instructions.
- **Report any dead birds you find.** High numbers of dead birds can indicate the virus is active in a particular area. Report dead birds at the [State of Michigan Sick or Dead Bird & Mammal Reporting Website](#).

For more information, as well as a chart of current virus activity, visit www.washtenaw.org/1849/West-Nile-Virus.

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Washtenaw County Health Department

The Washtenaw County Health Department promotes health and works to prevent disease and injury in our community. Our mission is to assure, in partnership with the community, the conditions necessary for people to live healthy lives through prevention and protection programs.

The Washtenaw County Health Department has achieved national accreditation through the Public Health Accreditation Board. Visit us at washtenaw.org/health or call 734-544-6700.

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