



County of Santa Cruz
HEALTH
SERVICES
AGENCY



PREVENT PREPARE PROTECT

PUBLIC HEALTH ADVISORY

August 5, 2004

Guidelines for Reporting Dead Birds and Dead Bird Disposal

If you have found a dead bird (**any species except pigeons, doves or chickens**), please report it to the California Department of Health Services (CDHS) by calling toll free **1-877-WNV-BIRD (1-877-968-2473)** or, you can submit the information online via the web site www.westnile.ca.gov and click on the Report Dead Birds button. **Residents are encouraged to use the online reporting system** as the phone lines can be overwhelmed with calls. If the dead bird fits certain criteria, CDHS will notify Santa Cruz Environmental Health Dept. or the Mosquito and Vector Control District to pick up the bird for testing.

If you are instructed to dispose of the dead bird, please follow these guidelines:

- Avoid touching the dead bird with your bare hands. Ensure that your clothing does not come in contact with the dead bird or any blood, secretions or feces from the dead bird. While it is unlikely that you will get West Nile virus from a dead bird, it is important to take these precautions to prevent infection from any infectious agents that might be present.
- Use disposable gloves or an inverted heavy-duty plastic bag to pick up the dead bird.
- Grasp the dead bird with your hand inside the plastic bag. Turn the plastic bag inside-out over the dead bird so that it is now inside the plastic bag and your hands are on the outside of the bag. Be sure that the beak or claws do not puncture the bag.
- Place the bagged bird carcass in another leak-proof plastic bag and tightly seal. The bird carcass is now “double-bagged”.
- Dispose of the double-bagged bird carcass by placing it in a trash container. Ensure that the trash container is secure from children and animals while awaiting pickup from your refuse company.
- **WASH YOUR HANDS** thoroughly with warm water and soap after disposal. If you wore disposable gloves, wash your gloved hands and then wash your bare hands thoroughly after you have removed the gloves.

There is currently no evidence that the West Nile Virus can be transmitted to humans that have taken precautions when handling dead birds.