



**Princeton Health Department**  
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**[www.princetonnj.gov](http://www.princetonnj.gov)**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **Princeton Health Department seeks public's help tracking West Nile Virus**

The Princeton Health Department is seeking the public's help in collecting dead birds to test for this season's arrival of West Nile virus.

Anyone can help us track West Nile virus by submitting dead blue jays, crows, hawks, and robins for testing.

The Princeton Health Department accepts submissions of birds and will continue to do so through the first frost. We ask that, first, you review the submission directions on our Health Department website. By following those instructions, you can safely pick up and transport a bird to the Health Department and or contact the Princeton Animal Control Officer for pick up.

Having the public involvement with dead bird surveillance covers a wider area and helps to identify West Nile virus before it shows up in people. Birds that test positive for the virus are reported to local mosquito control agencies so they can take appropriate action to protect public health. Mosquitoes feed on the blood of birds carrying West Nile virus and can subsequently spread the disease to humans. Public health officials recommend the following tips to make areas safer and reduce the numbers of mosquitoes that might spread the virus:

- Remove buckets, cups, bottles, flowerpots, plastic bags, tires or any water-holding containers.
- Do not allow water to stagnate in low-lying areas of the yard, in boats or on tarps that cover yard items.

- Keep birdbaths and pet bowls clean by scrubbing them and flushing with fresh water at least once a week. If you have a pond, ensure the water is moving by means of a fountain or waterfall.
- Clean fallen leaves and other debris out of roof gutters and spouting.
- Make sure outdoor trash cans have tight-fitting lids. If lids are not available, drill holes in the bottom of the can to allow water to drain.

For dead birds found Monday through Friday between the hours of 9 AM and 5 PM call the health department at 609-497-7608. The Princeton Animal Control Officer (ACO) will be notified to pick up the specimen. If after hours, call (609) 921-2100 and ask the dispatcher to notify the ACO to pick up the dead bird. If it cannot be picked up immediately please keep the bird on ice or under refrigeration, DO NOT FREEZE. Do not put ice directly in the bird bag, or the bird will be soggy and unsuitable for testing. Do not submit birds with maggots.

If possible, please complete the [Dead/Ill Bird Reporting Form](#) and submit with the bird.

NJ State Bird testing begins April 15 and continues through the first frost. For additional information or questions, please contact the Princeton Health Department, 609-497-7608

Additional information on mosquito-borne diseases can be found at <http://www.state.nj.us/health/cd/westnile/index.shtml>. For updated information about recommended mosquito repellants, visit the CDC website at <http://www.cdc.gov/westnile>.

