

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 20, 2024

Birds in Grand Traverse County Infected with West Nile Virus

Residents are asked to protect themselves from mosquito bites

On Friday, September 20, the Grand Traverse County Health Department (GTCHD) was notified that a hawk, a blue jay, and an owl in the county tested positive for [West Nile Virus \(WNV\)](#) by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR). This indicates that the virus is present in our county and can be transmitted to humans and other animals through the bite of an infected mosquito. There have been no confirmed human cases of WNV in the county. However, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, [18 human cases of WNV were statewide in 2024](#).

It's important to note that most people infected with WNV don't experience symptoms. However, some may develop mild symptoms such as fever, headache, body aches, and fatigue. In rare cases, severe symptoms can include high fever, neck stiffness, disorientation, muscle weakness, tremors or seizures, and vision loss.

"Since there are no vaccines or specific treatment for WNV, we are reminding residents to protect themselves and animals from mosquito bites as the risk of getting WNV and other mosquito-borne diseases remains high until freezing weather arrives in the fall," said GTCHD Environmental Health Director Brent Wheat.

To protect yourself from mosquito bites:

- Stay away from areas with mosquitoes
- Wear long sleeves and pants when you're outside
- Use insect repellent that contains the active ingredient DEET (at least 10%, don't use on infants younger than 2 months old)
- Keep grass short and landscape trimmed
- Avoid being outside during peak mosquito activity between dusk and dawn
- Use windows and doors with well-maintained screens
- Get rid of standing water around your home like flowerpots and pet bowls

To protect animals:

- Put farm animals in the barn during peak mosquito activity from dusk to dawn
- Use an insect repellent on animals approved for the species
- Eliminate standing water on your property
- Keep landscaping trimmed

For more information on WNV, visit [Michigan Emerging Diseases](#) and to report sick acting or dead wildlife, visit DNR's [Eyes in the Field](#).

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