

West Nile Virus and Dead Birds What Can I Do?

Crows and blue jays are the birds most likely to die when infected with West Nile virus (WNV). Other birds such as sparrows, common grackles, and birds of prey may also become infected with WNV and die. Local public health agencies often track or test dead birds because they may be the first sign of WNV activity in an area. Call your local health department to find out what to do about reporting dead birds or standing water where mosquitoes breed.



American Crow

- Adults are 17 to 21 inches long
- Feathers are black; slightly iridescent blue and purple
- Black bill, legs, and feet



Blue Jay

- Adults are 11 inches long
- Blue upper side, lighter gray breast
- Distinct feather crest on head
- Bill and feet dark gray-black



Common Grackle

- Length 12 inches
- Black with iridescent highlights of blue, purple, green, and bronze
- Yellow eyes
- Long, sharp black bill



House or Common Sparrow

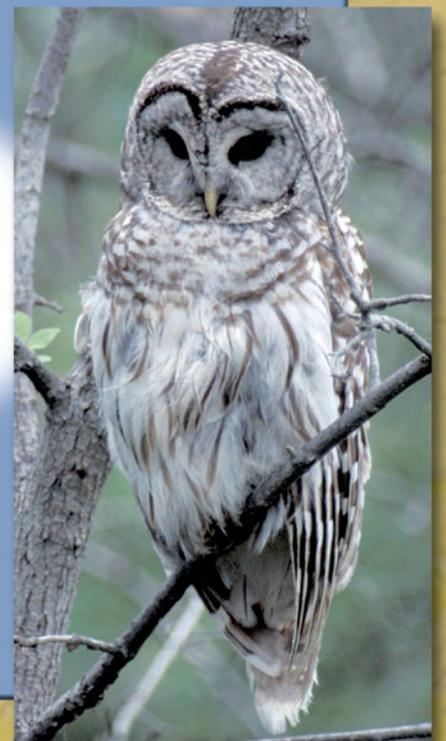
- Length less than 5 inches
- Cone-shaped beak and pink legs
- Gray crown; grayish side of neck and under parts
- Black throat, upper breast, and small mask; streaks on back
- Back of neck and upperparts rusty-brown
- Females and juveniles – colors softer, less black, more gray



Hawks

(general characteristics)

- Strongly hooked beak
- Sharp, curved claws or talons
- Plain colors - blacks, browns, and grays



Owls

(general characteristics)

- Hooked beaks with sharp edges
- Sharp, curved claws or talons
- Large, round heads
- Unusually soft, fluffy body feathers

To Dispose of a Dead Bird



- Wear plastic or latex gloves or use several leak-proof plastic bags as a glove
- Place the bird in a double plastic bag
- Close tightly making sure the claws or beak do not puncture the bags
- Place the bird in outside trash receptacle
- Wash hands thoroughly with soap

Call Your Local Health Department



Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services
1-866-628-9891 (Toll Free)
<http://www.dhss.mo.gov/WestNileVirus/>