



MOSQUITO and VECTOR MANAGEMENT DISTRICT of SANTA BARBARA COUNTY

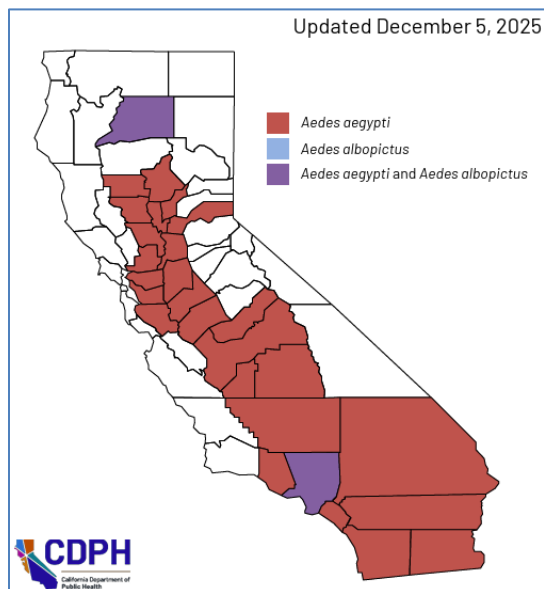
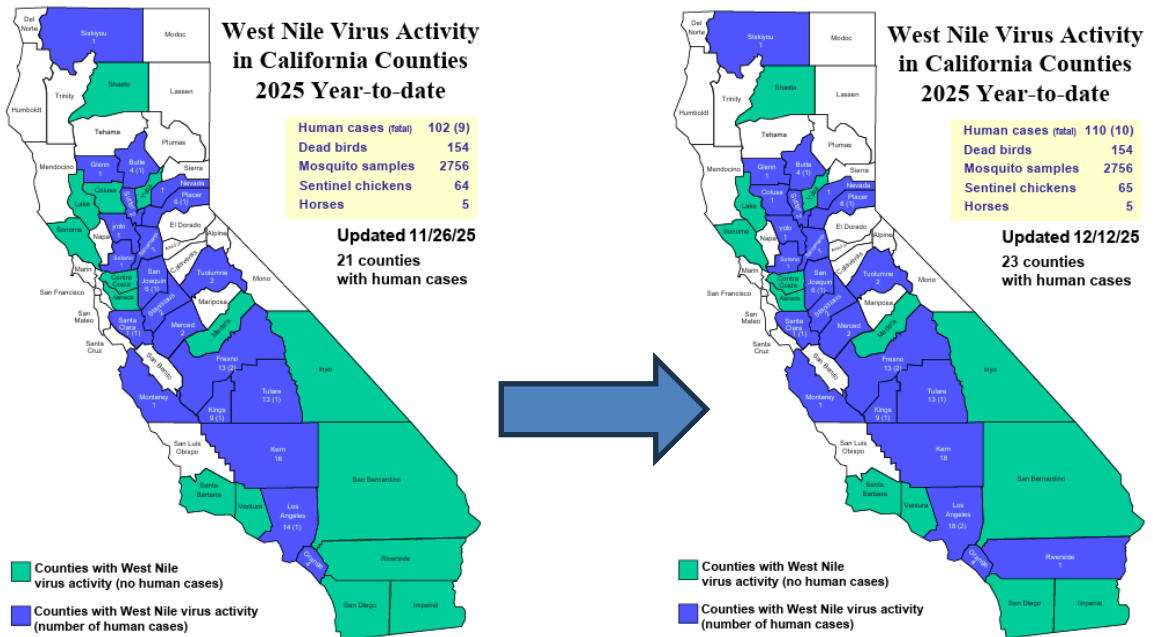
DISEASE SURVEILLANCE REPORT

December 2025

Santa Barbara County Vector-borne Disease Surveillance

A horse diagnosed in August in the Buellton area has been Santa Barbara County's only 2025 detection of West Nile virus (WNV). One dead bird was reported to the WNV hotline in December, but it had been dead too long for testing. In 2025, 50 dead birds were reported, 21 were tested for WNV, and none tested positive. The District submitted 188 mosquito samples to test for WNV, Western equine encephalitis virus (WEE), and St. Louis encephalitis virus (SLE); all tested negative. WEE and SLE have never been documented in the County.

California Vector-borne Disease Surveillance: Change in WNV activity in December



Update on Invasive *Aedes* Mosquito in California

No invasive *Aedes* species have been detected in Santa Barbara County since May 2021. *Aedes aegypti* is found in 28 California counties and *Aedes albopictus* is found in two.

In 2025, the CA Dept. of Public Health reports 6 locally-transmitted cases of dengue virus in California (five of them located in the City of La Puente, Los Angeles County). Non-native *Aedes* mosquitoes, capable of vectoring dengue, Zika, and chikungunya viruses, are common in the Greater Los Angeles area. One mosquito sample collected in Greater L.A. has also tested positive for dengue virus. In 2024, there were 18 locally-transmitted dengue cases. As of December 1, 2025, there have been 148 travel-related human dengue cases and two travel-related cases of Zika virus in California. There has been one travel-related case of dengue virus in Santa Barbara County. There have been 11 travel-related cases of chikungunya virus in California, including one in Santa Barbara County.



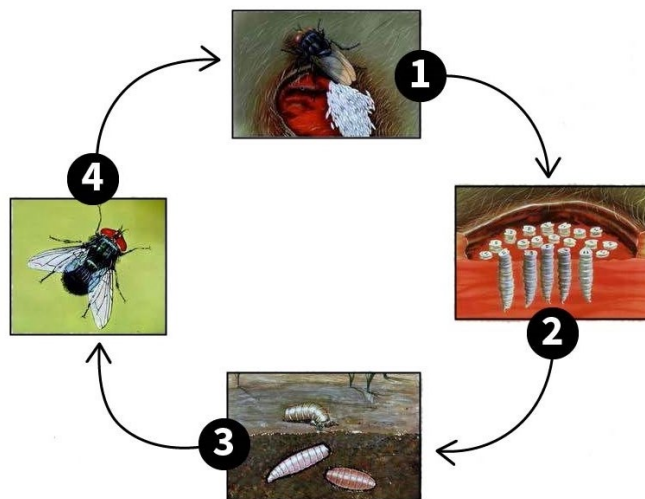
The NWS maggot has screw-like ridges and sharp mouth hooks for burrowing into its host's tissue.
Photo USDA



An adult NWS fly. Photo: US Dept. of Agriculture (USDA)

New World Screwworm Fly (NWS) *Cochliomyia hominivorax*

An unpleasant pest from the past has reemerged in North America—the New World screwworm (NWS). Females lay eggs in the open wounds of live, warm-blooded animals, and the fly larvae (maggots) consume the healthy flesh. Cattle and other livestock are the primary hosts. Cattle fatalities reach 80% if untreated. Secondary hosts include dogs and humans. The NWS was eliminated from North and Central America using sterile insect technique (SIT) from 1957 to 1991. SIT consists of irradiating male flies until they are infertile, then releasing them to mate with wild females; the resulting eggs will not hatch. In response to the reemergence of NWS, one hundred million sterile males are being released per week in Mexico. Last month, new veterinary drugs effective against screwworm were approved for cattle and dogs. It has been necessary to place impactful restrictions on the livestock import/export industry. An infestation is possible in California, though Texas and Florida are most at risk for reemergence of this pest. An infested deer was reported in the Florida Keys in 2017.



Screwworm flies lay eggs in an exposed wound. The maggots feed on healthy living flesh until they are ready to drop off the animal and pupate underground. Illustration by USDA-APHIS (Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service)