

HUNTERS NEEDED

WEST NILE VIRUS SURVEY IN WILD TURKEY AND RUFFED GROUSE IN ONTARIO

Environment and Climate Change Canada, Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters, and the Canadian Wildlife Health Cooperative



This study aims to determine the number, level, and distribution of wild turkeys and ruffed grouse exposed to West Nile Virus (WNV) in Ontario.

In 2017, a total of 70 birds were assessed for WNV by the Canadian Wildlife Health Cooperative (CWHC), with 41 (58.6%) testing positive, including the first West Nile-positive wild turkey in Ontario and also a Trumpeter swan and a Double-crested cormorant.

We are recruiting hunters who will be hunting wild turkey and/or ruffed grouse this fall/winter. Participants will be provided with filter strips for blood collection and a postage-paid envelope for submitting samples. When cleaning birds hunters are encouraged to wear gloves to prevent contact with potentially harmful bacteria and viruses, and to always cook meat properly.

WNV is most often spread by the bite of an infected mosquito, mosquitoes are infected when they feed on infected birds, and can in turn spread WNV to humans and other animals when they bite. Bird species vary in their susceptibility to the virus, and many birds are exposed without developing significant disease. In our experience, grouse and turkeys with illness due to WNV are rare, but we don't know how many birds are actually exposed to the virus.

Birds with WNV often show neurological signs including poor coordination, tremors, weakness, and unable to walk or fly.



To participate contact: Dr. Amanda MacDonald, amacdo21@uoguelph.ca
If dead birds found, contact the CWHC, 1-866-673-4781



Environment and
Climate Change Canada

