

New World Screwworm



WHAT IS NEW WORLD SCREWORM?

New World screwworms (NWS) are parasitic flies (*Cochliomyia hominivorax*) that lay eggs in open wounds or mucous membranes such as the nostrils, eyes, genitalia, newborn navels or mouths of live warm-blooded animals. These eggs hatch into a type of parasitic larvae (maggots) that only feed on living tissue, while other species of fly larvae prefer dead or necrotic tissue. NWS larvae burrow or "screw" into living tissue with sharp mouth hooks, giving them a screw-like appearance. Infested wounds quickly become infected and, if left untreated, will kill the infested animals.

NWS can kill wildlife in 7-10 days if untreated!

WHAT TO LOOK FOR

- Maggot infested wounds on living animals
- Deep, pocketing wounds into live tissue
- Vertically buried maggots
- Infested navels or mucus membranes (eyes, nose, mouth, ears, genitalia)
- White egg masses around wound edges (see picture)
- Foul smelling, open wounds



COMMONLY AFFECTED WILDLIFE SPECIES

- White-tailed deer
- Rabbits (jackrabbits, cottontails)
- Other small mammals (raccoons, opossums, squirrels)
- Birds, rarely

Note: All warm-blooded animals can be infested

COMMONLY INFESTED LOCATIONS

- Navels of newborns
- Mucous membranes
- Eyes
- Nostrils
- Ears
- Mouth
- Genitalia
- Wounds
- Cuts
- Scratches
- Punctures

Any open wound, no matter how small, can attract NWS

IMMEDIATE ACTION REQUIRED – DO NOT DELAY!

NWS is a mandatory reportable disease in the United States.

Report ALL suspected cases immediately to your center's veterinarian, a local TPWD biologist or TAHC regional office. Reporting is crucial to the implementation of management actions and eradication of NWS.

WHO TO CONTACT

Livestock

(800) 550-8242

Find the list of regional offices at tahc.texas.gov/agency/contact.html#regions

Humans

(888) 963-7111

dshs.texas.gov/regional-local-health-operations/public-health-regions

Wildlife

(512) 389-4505

Find wildlife biologists by county at tpwd.texas.gov/biologist

Domestic Pets

Contact your local veterinarian

REQUIRED INFORMATION WHEN REPORTING

- Contact name and phone number
- GPS location and email
- Animal species, age, sex
- Photos of the wound and larvae (if possible)

SAMPLE COLLECTION

Only if directed by TPWD, USDA or TAHC Official:

- Remove ALL eggs/maggots with forceps.
- Place in vial with 70% isopropyl alcohol – container must be sealed in a plastic bag for shipment/handoff to local wildlife biologist.
- Do not release animals until all wounds are treated and healed.
- Provide fly traps, fly sticky tape or fly deterrents.
- Provide outreach and education for staff on NWS.

Contact your veterinarian for proper wound treatments.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Texas Parks and Wildlife Department New World Screwworm Webpage and Information Sheets

<https://tpwd.texas.gov/screwworm>

USDA-APHIS New World Screwworm Webpage

<https://www.aphis.usda.gov/livestock-poultry-disease/cattle/ticks/screwworm>

Pesticides for Control of New World Screwworm (NWS, *Cochliomyia hominivorax*)

<https://www.aphis.usda.gov/sites/default/files/pesticides-for-nws.pdf>

Texas Animal Health Commission New World Screwworm Webpage

<https://www.tahc.texas.gov/emergency/nws.html>

New World Screwworm: A Threat to Wildlife

<https://www.aphis.usda.gov/sites/default/files/factsheet-nws-hunters-508.pdf>

FDA New World Screwworm: Information for Veterinarians

<https://www.fda.gov/animal-veterinary/safety-health/new-world-screwworm-information-veterinarians>

Texas A&M AgriLife Wildlife Monitoring Webpage and Information Sheets

<https://agrilifeextension.tamu.edu/wildlife-monitoring-and-management-for-new-world-screwworm/>