



Public Health Services One Health Epidemiology Program Newsletter

Epidemiology & Immunization Services Branch

Wednesday, October 7, 2026

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Zoonotic Diseases

New World Screwworm Information and Testing Guidance

Background

New World Screwworm (NWS or *Cochliomyia hominivorax*) is an obligate myiasis parasitic fly whose larvae cause severe damage on living tissue in all warm-blooded creatures. It can have severe health outcomes for birds and mammals (including humans) causing significant impacts to animal welfare and food-producing industries.

The NWS outbreak has spread north through Central America and Mexico. On June 3, 2026, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) confirmed NWS entered the United States in Texas. Since the mid-1960s, a biological barrier has been maintained at the Darién Gap in Panama using sterile flies to prevent the northern spread of the NWS fly. Surveillance from veterinarians,

animal care givers, local animal health officers, producers, and human medical professionals for this parasite is needed to identify suspect cases in our region.

Given that NWS has now been [detected in the United States](#), please see [reporting criteria](#) and [specimen collection](#) guidance for animals.

Clinical Signs

Mammals and birds typically exhibit:

- Irritated behavior
- Uncontrollable headshaking
- Noticeable presence or smell of decay
- Fly maggots or larvae in wounds
- Evidence of a myiasis (fly strike)

Reporting Criteria to California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) within 24 hours:

1. Report any larvae that are present on live animals, attached/feeding on living tissues.
2. Report larvae on ANY animal originating from countries or states with infested zones or surveillance zones.



**Reporting Procedures for New World
Screwworm (NWS) in Animals**

1. Thoroughly examine all **warm-blooded domestic animals** for foul-smelling, maggot-infested wounds and/or mucous membranes.
2. **Immediately report** any suspicious flies, wounds, maggots, or infestations to the state's animal health branch: **866-922-2473**
3. Remove all maggots, collect ideally 10 - 20 specimens of varying stages from deep in the wound, and place in **≥70%** ethanol or isopropyl alcohol.



Photo: DPDx, CDC

**Larval size comparison:
NWS (top) vs human botfly**



Image sourced via APHIS NWS Gallery

Specimen Collection

1. Please reference the [Foreign Animal Disease Investigation Guide: New World Screwworm](#) on collecting, handling, and packaging the larval and/or adult fly specimens. Note that ice packs or dry ice are **NOT** needed for shipping.
 - Wear gloves.
 - Place all larvae in a leakproof and shatterproof vial with 70% ethanol or isopropyl alcohol (**NOT water or formalin**); collect multiple sizes of larvae.
 - Make sure the alcohol covers the specimens completely.
 - Secure the screw top or tight-fitting lid.
 - If flies are present, collect adults in a dry vial.
 - Label vial(s) with permanent ink with animal ID and date.
 - Place vial(s) in secondary container with absorbent material (e.g., sealable Ziploc bag containing paper towels).
 - Place in a sturdy cardboard box (at least 4x4x3 inches); include submission form in its own sealable Ziploc bag with the shipment.
 - Forms for specimen submission for testing will be provided by CDFA once the case is reported.
2. Please send notification emails **within 24 hours** to CDFA and Veterinary Public Health (VPH):
 - a. **To:** Alisha.Olmstead@cdfa.ca.gov; Jenny.Tam@cdfa.ca.gov; Matthew.Vahabi@cdfa.ca.gov; Andrea.Garbaba@cdfa.ca.gov; Nicki.Humphrey@cdfa.ca.gov; Ann.Ikelman@cdfa.ca.gov; Laura.Bradley@cdfa.ca.gov

CC: Emily.Trumbull@sdcounty.ca.gov; Julie.Breher@sdcounty.ca.gov; Meghan.Villalobos@sdcounty.ca.gov; Olivia.Springfield1@sdcounty.ca.gov; phs.ohep.hhsa@sdcounty.ca.gov
 - b. **Subject line:** Suspected New World Screwworm
 - c. **Body of email:** Give a brief history and include any photos you may have taken.
3. CDFA will assign the specimen submission form and Foreign Animal Disease (FAD) number. This number needs to be entered into Box 31 (History) on the prefilled [VS Form5 38 Parasite submission form](#).
4. CDFA will provide a pre-paid overnight shipping label for you to use.
5. Place shipping label on box containing properly packaged specimen(s) and submission form (print out the form with the assigned FAD# entered into Box 31), securely seal box with packing tape, and schedule pick up/take to shipping center.

**CDFA will handle alerting USDA National Veterinary Services Laboratory regarding the incoming package, as the submission will officially come from CDFA.*

Treatment

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has compiled a [list of drugs](#) that could be used extra-label when appropriate and necessary based on the current literature. FDA will continue to update the [New World Screwworm: Information for Veterinarians](#) page as more information becomes available.

**Human exposures or suspect cases should consult their medical provider.*

Resources

- [About New World Screwworm | Centers For Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#)
- [Dear Veterinarian Letter: Use of FDA-Authorized Animal Drugs Against New World Screwworm Myiasis | FDA](#)
- [New World Screwworm | CDFA](#)
- [New World Screwworm: Information for Veterinarians | FDA](#)
- [New World screwworm \(NWS\) | American Veterinary Medical Association](#)
- [New World Screwworm Outbreak | USDA](#)
- [Resurgence of New World Screwworm in the Americas: What Healthcare Providers Need to Know | CDC](#)
- [Stop Screwworm: Unified Government Response To Protect the United States | USDA](#)

Zoonotic Diseases Detected in Animals in San Diego County

Figure 1. Select Zoonotic Diseases Detected in Animals in San Diego County Reported by IDEXX, January 1, 2026 – September 17, 2026 (n = 74)

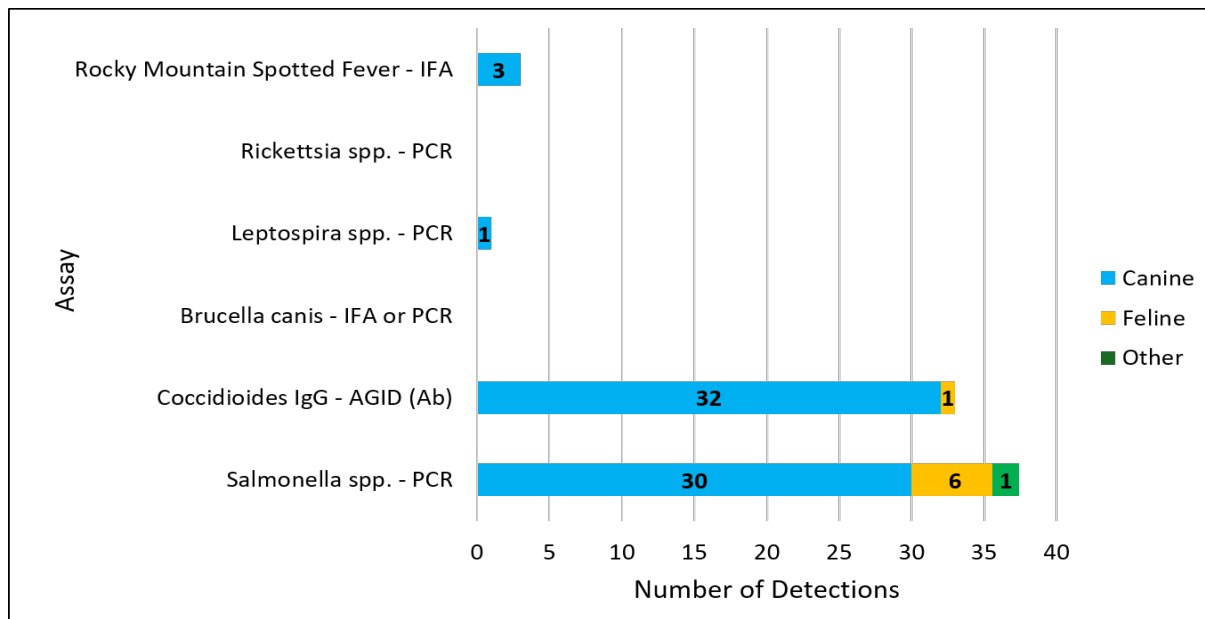
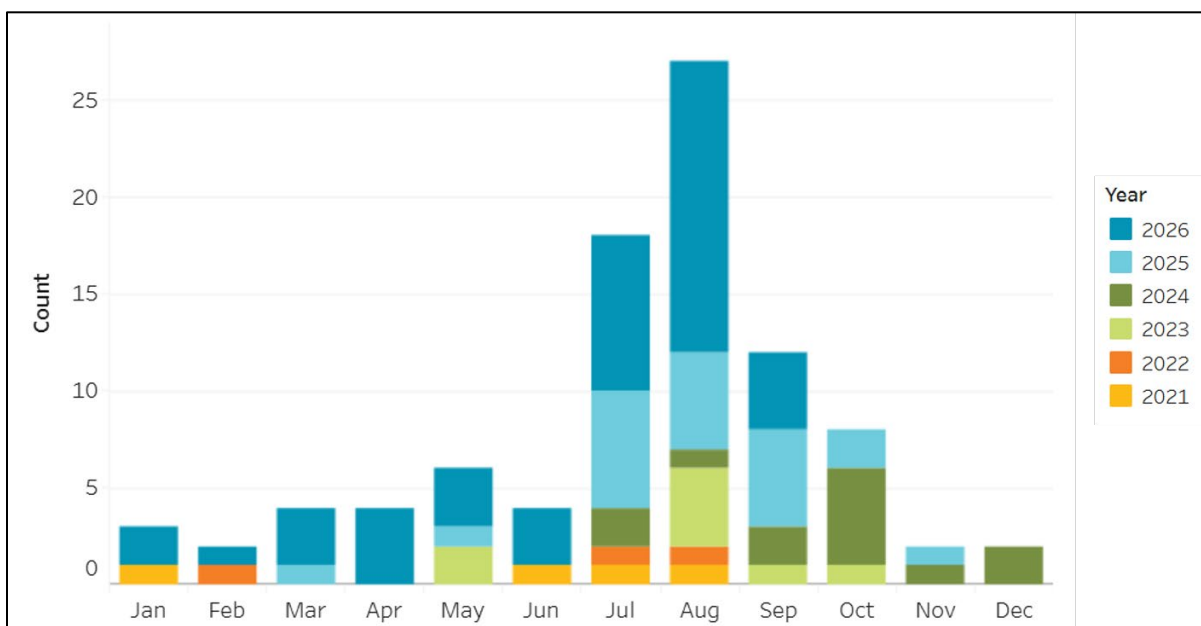


Figure 2. Rabies Cases Detected by the San Diego County Public Health Laboratory, 2021 – 2026 (n = 92)



**Updated September 10, 2026. Totals do not include specimens that were unsatisfactory for testing or those found outside of San Diego County.*

For more information on these or other diseases of interest, please contact the One Health Epidemiology Program at phs.ohep.hhsa@sdcounty.ca.gov.

Announcements

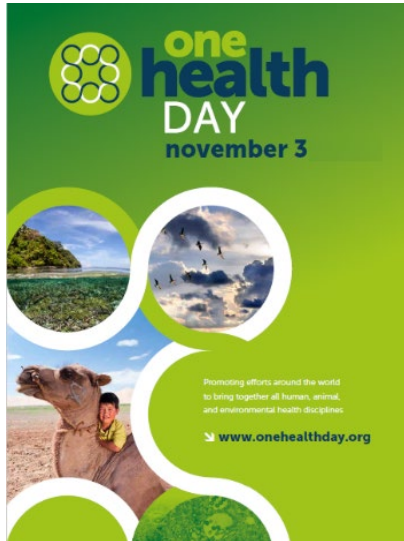
World Food Day is Celebrated on October 16, 2026



World Food Day is Friday October 16, 2026. This day raises awareness about food security and the importance of ensuring everyone has access to sufficient, safe, diverse, and nutritious food. This year's theme, "Innovate today. Nourish Tomorrow.", highlights the importance of developing sustainable solutions that support food systems while protecting the planet for future generations.

This day reminds us that food security is closely connected to human health, the environment, agriculture and the communities we live in. Supporting sustainable food systems, improving access to nutritious food, and working together across sectors can help build a healthier and more resilient future for people and the planet.

One Health Day is Celebrated on November 3, 2026



[One Health Day](#) is Tuesday November 3, 2026. One Health Day brings awareness to the connection between human, animal, and environmental health and the importance of working across these areas to address shared health concerns.

One Health collaboration supports the prevention, detection, and response to health threats such as zoonotic diseases, antimicrobial resistance, food safety concerns, and vector-borne diseases. As we recognize One Health Day, we are reminded that protecting the health of people also means considering the health of animals and the environments we share.

View the 2025-2026 Zoonoses & One Health Updates (ZOHU) Call Webinar Series

The latest webinar took place on September 2, 2026. The next webinar will take place on October 17, 2026, and veterinarians from USDA and CDFA will discuss H5N1. Each webinar is recorded and will be posted online.

View [ZOHU webinar recordings](#) to learn more about zoonotic diseases and One Health issues. Veterinarians can receive **one hour of FREE continuing education credits** for attending future webinars by creating a login and taking a quiz through [CDC Train](#).

[View the 2025-2026 ZOHU Webinars Today!](#)

County Resources

County Resources to Check Out

Rabies

Page last updated 07/25/2025

Rabies is a fatal but preventable viral disease. It can spread to people and pets through the bites and scratches of an infected animal. Rabies affects the central nervous system. If a person does not receive prompt and appropriate medical care after exposure to rabies, and before symptoms start, the virus will progress to the brain. This almost always results in death.

On this page:

- [Transmission \(Spread\)](#)
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Transmission (Spread)

In the United States, rabies is mostly found in wild animals like bats, skunks, raccoons, and foxes. In California, rabies is mostly found in bats and skunks. Rabies in pet dogs and cats is possible, but less common because many pets are vaccinated against rabies.

People and animals can get rabies if an animal with rabies:

- Bites them, or
- If saliva from an animal with rabies gets into a break in a person's or animal's skin or into their eyes, nose, or mouth.

People and animals can't get rabies just by touching or being near an animal with rabies. But rabies exposures in pets and livestock may not always be noticed by their owners and caretakers. It is important to work with a veterinarian to prevent rabies in animals.

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Recent Zoonotic Disease Publications

- [Low Risk for Locally Acquired Chagas Disease in California: A Review of Human Cases and Triatomine Submissions, 2013–2023 | Public Library of Science](#)
 - Triatomine submissions and human case reports made to the California Department of Public Health between 2013 and 2023 are summarized in this article. Of 40 human cases, 31 were considered associated with travel, while 9 were likely from local transmission. The findings indicate risk for locally acquired chagas disease is low.
- [Clinical Profile and Genomic Characterization of the 2026 Bundibugyo Virus Index Case in Uganda | Nature Medicine](#)
 - This report describes the presentation and diagnosis of the index case of the current Ebola outbreak in Democratic Republic of Congo and Uganda. The virus sequence of the virus genome indicates this is a unique spillover event from previous outbreaks.
- [Brucellosis Surveillance — United States, 2010–2024 | CDC](#)
 - Human brucellosis infections have remained low due to ongoing pasteurization and animal disease control programs. Consuming unpasteurized dairy products or having direct contact with tissues or fluids from infected animals have been identified as common forms of exposure to *Brucella* species. The most frequently reported exposures among persons with international travel were consumption of unpasteurized dairy products or undercooked meat (n = 195 [73%]). Among persons without international travel, the most frequently reported exposures were animal contact (n = 116 [62%]). One third of cases in this analysis indicated contact with dogs. Another pattern was animal contact among persons without international travel, particularly during hunting-related activities.

How to Contact Us

For more information, contact the San Diego One Health Epidemiology Program through our [contact form](#), via e-mail at phs.ohep.hhsa@sdcounty.ca.gov, or call the Epidemiology Unit at (619) 692-8499.

We want to know if you are seeing any unusual, new, or emerging animal disease or outbreak. We can provide consultation, help investigate these diseases, and provide resources. Keeping us informed helps us protect our human and animal community.

Sign up for our One Health Epidemiology Network Updates

Community Highlights

How to get Featured in the OHEP Newsletter

We would love to feature your work in our newsletter! Please send photos, videos, and short descriptions to phs.ohep.hhsa@sdcounty.ca.gov so we can highlight the work you do around the County.

Thank you!

If you have any questions about the content of this newsletter or the One Health Epidemiology Program, please email phs.ohep.hhsa@sdcounty.ca.gov.



The Public Health Services department, County of San Diego Health and Human Services Agency, has maintained national public health accreditation, since May 17, 2016, and was re-accredited by the Public Health Accreditation Board on August 21, 2023.