

West Nile Corvid Submission ID Chart

This chart is intended to aid field collectors in identifying corvid species for the purpose of WNV testing. Oral swabs from corvids, meeting the submission criteria as outlined in this protocol, can be collected and tested at the regional or state laboratory. At this time the accuracy of the oral swab test for other species of birds is unknown. Non-corvids should NOT be tested using oral swabs.

Common Raven



- throughout CO except far eastern plains
- black; 24 inches long; >2 pounds
- rounded tail (wedge-shaped)
- shaggy throat; thick bill

American Crow



- found throughout the state
- black; 17.5 inches; about 1 pound
- large head; short square tail

Black-billed Magpie



- found throughout CO
- 19 inches long; very long tail
- white belly, scapulars, and wing patches

Clark's Nutcracker



- In high mountain forests
- 12 inches long
- black and white tail; gray body

Pinyon Jay



- usually near pines in the foothills
- 10.5 inches long
- dusty blue all over, brighter blue face
- no feather crest on head

Steller's Jay



- foothills/mountain forests
- 11.5 inches long
- dark blue all over, pale blue rump
- dark feather crest on head
- black head with white eyebrows

Western Scrub Jay



- throughout CO except extreme Northeast
- 11.5 inches long
- gray-blue back, faint blue breastband
- grayish underparts
- no feather crest on head

Blue Jay



- urban and riparian areas mostly along front range
- 11 inches long
- blue upperside, lighter gray breast
- feather crest on head
- black collar

Gray Jay



- in high mountain forests
- 11.5 inches long
- very fluffy, loose gray plumage

Birds Commonly Mistaken for Corvids

These birds are often mistaken for corvids. Oral swabs should NOT be collected and submitted for testing from these species. Testing of non-corvid species would require submission of the entire carcass and must be pre-approved by CDPHE.

Red-winged blackbird



- throughout CO, especially marshy areas
- 8.75 inches long
- dull black body with orange-red markings on wing

Brewers Blackbird



- throughout CO, especially open agricultural land and suburbs
- 9 inches long
- glossy black; iridescence; greenish tint on back, purplish head and throat
- yellow eye

European Starling



- throughout CO
- 8.5 inches long
- bright yellow bill
- speckled black plumage
- iridescence – green body, purple on head and neck

Common Grackle



- throughout CO
- 12.5 inches long
- black with iridescence; bluish head
- yellow eye

Notes

- Bird measurements are in inches from tip of beak to edge of tail.
- Descriptions refer to adult males in summer plumage
- For information on WNV please call your local health department or agency or see our web site: www.fightthebitecolorado.com

All photos used with permission from photographer.

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