

NEW WORLD SCREWORM (NWS)

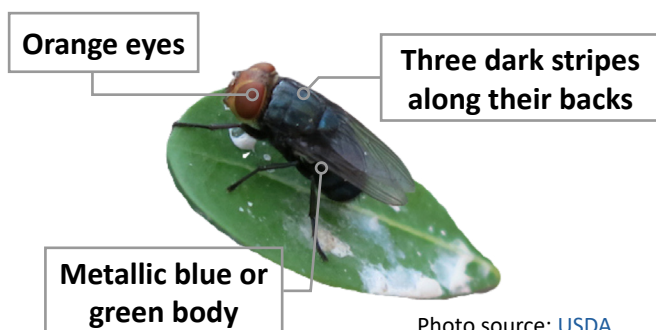
When New World Screwworm (NWS) fly larvae (maggots) burrow into the flesh of a living animal, they cause serious, often deadly damage. NWS can infest livestock, pets, wildlife, occasionally birds, and in rare cases, people.

If you have concerns about NWS, contact your healthcare provider, your animal's veterinarian or call Fort Bend County Health & Human Services at 281-238-3500.

How is it spread?

NWS flies are typically found in South America and the Caribbean. In recent years, NWS has moved northward through Central America and Mexico.

Adult NWS flies are about the size of a common housefly (or slightly larger). They have:



What are the symptoms?

Symptoms of NWS larvae (maggot) infection in mammals and birds include:

- Irritated behavior
- Head shaking
- Smell of decay
- Presence of fly larvae (maggots) in wounds

Disclaimer: This information does not constitute medical advice or a doctor-patient relationship

Source: "New World Screwworm," Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, last modified June 4, 2026, <https://www.aphis.usda.gov/livestock-poultry-disease/cattle/ticks/screwworm>

How do I prevent infection?

NWS can infest warm-blooded animals, including livestock, pets, wildlife, people and even birds. Some steps you can take to prevent infestation:

- Watch for signs of NWS in pets and livestock.
- Make sure pets traveling internationally are inspected for screwworm.
- Protect pets and livestock from other wound-causing parasites such as ticks.

Treatment

If you believe there is an NWS larvae (maggot) infestation, take immediate action:

- **For Livestock and Pets:** Contact your veterinarian and the Texas Animal Health Commission.
- **Wildlife:** Contact Texas Parks and Wildlife through your local wildlife biologist.
- **For People:** Contact your healthcare provider immediately.

Do not remove maggots or eggs yourself. Your healthcare provider will remove them, sometimes surgically.



Do not throw any live maggots in the trash or outside as this could result in NWS spreading in your area.

If you think you have found a screwworm, report it immediately to the Texas Animal Health Commission at (800) 550-8242.