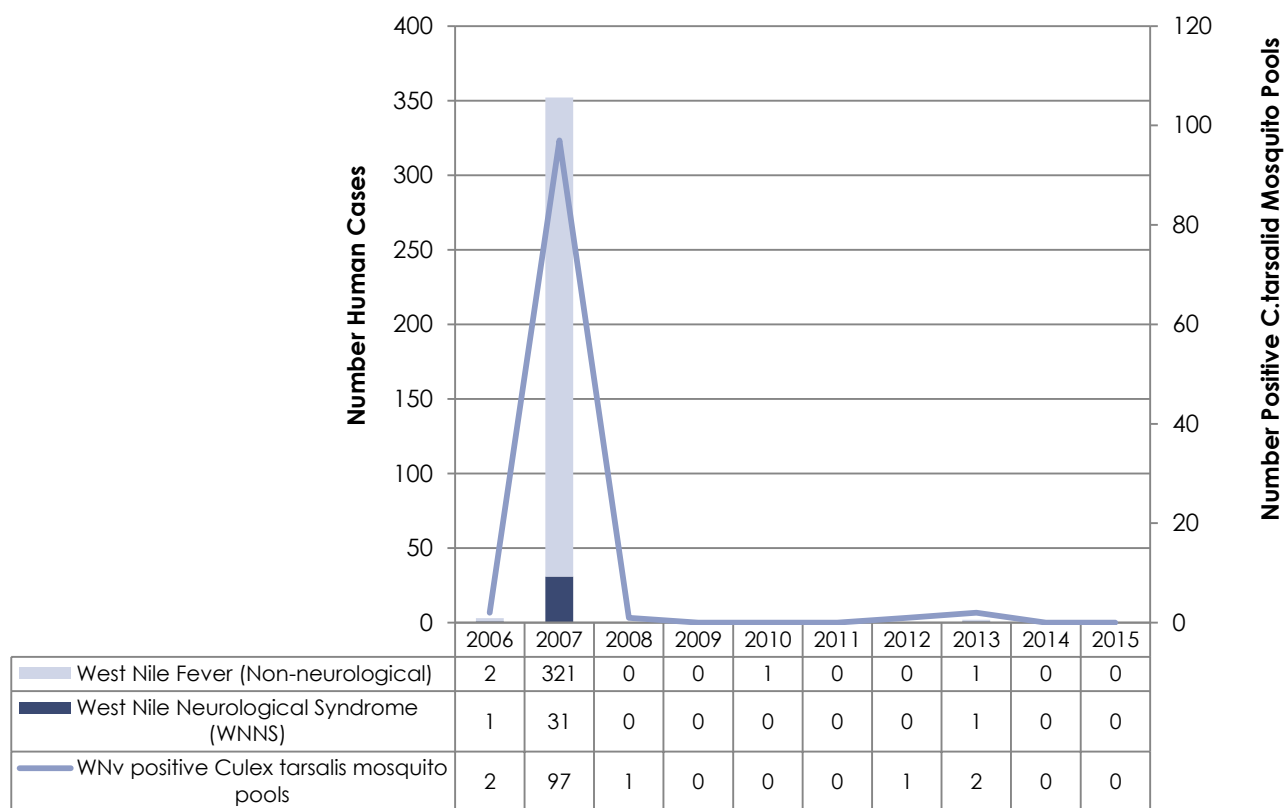


# West Nile Virus

## Highlights

- West Nile virus (WNV) was introduced to North America in 1999. In Canada, cases were first reported in 2002. In 2003, Saskatchewan reported the first cases, including 62 cases in Saskatoon Health Region (not shown).
- Approximately 80% of human WNV infections are asymptomatic. Less than 1% of infected individuals develop neuro-invasive disease, which typically manifests as meningitis, encephalitis, or acute flaccid paralysis<sup>2</sup>. In most Canadian jurisdictions only West Nile Neurological Syndrome is now reported.
- In order to ensure appropriate risk communication and guidance on personal protection and other interventions, such as mosquito control, Saskatchewan conducts surveillance for risk factors for West Nile virus disease, namely monitoring of the numbers and infectivity of *Culex tarsalis* mosquitoes. *Culex tarsalis* is believed to be the only species that can transmit the disease to humans. Risk varies greatly from year to year, depending on climate and the proportion of mosquitoes infected with the virus.
- 2007 was a record year for WNV in Saskatchewan. Over six times the number of cases were reported in Saskatoon Health Region than in 2003, including 31 cases of neurological syndrome (Figure 1).

**Figure 1: West Nile Virus Fever and Neurological Syndrome, Saskatoon Health Region, 2006 to 2015**



Source: iPHIS