



Fly Trapping: A Critical Tool for Detecting New World Screwworm

Fly trapping is an important part of the United States' New World screwworm (NWS) multi-faceted surveillance and response activities. The U.S. Department of Agriculture and State partners place specialized traps in high-risk areas to detect the presence of NWS flies. Traps are an important early warning tool—providing critical data to help USDA contain, control, and eliminate the pest before it can threaten livestock, pets, and wildlife.

When did trapping start and how long will it last?

The USDA began trapping in July 2025. We are continuously assessing the situation and trap locations to identify high-risk areas for strategic trap placement as conditions change. In addition, USDA is also monitoring approximately 7,500 exotic fruit fly traps for the presence of NWS flies.

Will USDA expand the trapping zone to include inland areas that are not on the border?

Trap locations are carefully selected to optimize their effectiveness. We have relocated the trap line several times to avoid trapping the sterile male flies we are releasing in our control efforts. The need to shift traps will continue as the sterile fly release zone shifts in response to NWS spread.

What do the screwworm traps look like?

There are three main types of NWS fly traps: Sticky

Fly Traps, Liver-baited Net Traps, and Gator Traps. If you see a trap hanging in a tree, please do not move it.

Sticky Fly traps: Each cylindrical trap is made from 13x6.5-inch plastic irrigation pipe. A sign is attached to the trap for identification and instructions. The trap is hung 2-4 feet off the ground, coated with sticky glue, and Swormlure attractant is applied. NWS flies, which are attracted to the smell, get stuck on the sticky surface when they land on the trap. USDA or State partners service the traps twice weekly to collect flies and refresh the sticky coating and attractants.



Liver-baited Net Traps: This type of trap requires a trained trapper who observes suspect NWS flies that are attracted to the rotten liver bait and captures them using a hand net. The flies are contained and transported to the laboratory.



Gator Traps: These traps use a rotten liver bait inside a cylindrical chamber, while a battery-operated fan disseminates the odor of the bait into the surroundings. Flies are attracted and



enter the funnel-like trap opening but are unable to exit. These traps are good for short-term monitoring over a few hours and can catch flies while USDA or State partners are servicing other traps.

Will the traps draw NWS to new areas?

No. The traps will not cause NWS to spread to new areas, but they will help us to detect the pest if it spreads further.

Can the traps catch screwworm flies to keep them out of an area or eliminate them from an area?

The traps will help us detect screwworm flies if they are in an area. They are a tool to help us know where the flies are spreading. They do not catch enough flies to reduce populations or stop them from spreading.

Can someone make their own traps to place on their property?

We do not recommend that landowners make and place their own traps. Trap locations are carefully selected to optimize their effectiveness and to avoid killing the sterile flies we release to combat NWS.

What happens if USDA finds a screwworm fly in one of the traps?

If USDA confirms the detection of a fertile NWS in a trap, USDA and State officials will quickly take steps to contain, control, and eradicate the pest. USDA has successfully eradicated NWS from the United States before using a proven combination of surveillance, animal movement controls, sterile insect releases, and public outreach.

What does it mean if traps aren't catching NWS flies in areas where animal cases have occurred?

It's possible there is only a very small number of fertile flies in the area, rather than a large or growing local population. It's also important to consider fly behavior: when live animal hosts are available, fertile female screwworm flies will choose an animal over a trap. Traps are very useful, but they will never detect every fly, which is why they are used as part of an overall surveillance system that also includes animal inspections, wildlife surveillance, and public outreach.

More Information

To learn more about NWS, the current situation, or USDA's response plans, scan the QR code or go to [screwworm.gov](https://www.screwworm.gov).

