

# Arbovirus Surveillance in Georgia 2001-2008

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## Body proves Bigfoot no myth, hunters say

### STORY HIGHLIGHTS

- North Georgia men say they've found a den of Bigfoot creatures
- They say they reveal details of one Bigfoot on Friday in California
- The body of the furry half-man-half ape is 7 feet, 7 inches tall, they say
- Men won't reveal Bigfoot den's location because they don't want others disturbed

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(CNN) — A policeman and a former corrections officer say that on Friday they will unveil evidence of what they claim is their biggest find ever: the body of Bigfoot.



PHOTO GALLERY  
The thawed body of a creature reported to be Bigfoot reportedly weighs more than 500 pounds.

1 of 2

Matthew Whitton and Rick Dyer, a pair of Bigfoot-hunting hobbyists from north Georgia, say they found the creature's body in a wooded area and spotted several similar creatures that were still alive.

The carcass of the furry half-man, half-ape is 7 feet, 7 inches tall and weighs more than 500 pounds, they say. However, the two are not disclosing the exact location of their discovery to protect the remaining creatures.

Tom Nelson, chairman of the biology department at North Georgia College and State University in Dalton, Ga., said he's "pretty skeptical" the world will feast its eyes on a new species Friday.

"That would certainly rock mammalogy," joked Nelson, who specializes in the study of mammals. "I see a research grant in my future."

Whitton and Dyer plan to unveil what they say is DNA and photo evidence of the discovery in Palo Alto, California, in conjunction with a group called Searching for Bigfoot Inc.

A photograph on that group's Web site shows what appears to be the body of a large, hairy creature with an ape-like face, stuffed into a large freezer.

According to a written release, the two announced the discovery on an Internet radio show, "Squatch Detective," several weeks ago. [iReport.com: Do you believe in Bigfoot?](#)

"The only person we would allow to come down and verify the body was 'the Real Bigfoot Hunter,' Tom Blacard," Dyer said, referring to Searching for Bigfoot's CEO, who has been looking for the elusive, legendary creature in the United States and Canada since 1971.

Whitton is a Georgia police officer who is on administrative leave after being shot in the wrist during a pursuit. Dyer is a former prison guard.

DNA tests on the body have begun, said the statement, and "extensive scientific studies" will be done on the body by scientists, including a molecular biologist, an anthropologist and a paleontologist.

Nelson, the university professor, acknowledged that new species of animals have been discovered in recent decades and that, in science, "we always acknowledge the possibility of something new."

But he said that even in north Georgia, home to the Blue Ridge Mountains and the foot of the Appalachian Trail, it stretches the imagination to think a family of 7-foot-tall creatures could have eluded hunters, trappers and creeping development until now.

"To the average person, these places just seem like extreme wilderness where you'll find lions and tigers and bears," he said. "The reality is that you're never more than a mile from a road."

The group says the animal is male, has reddish hair and "blackish-gray" eyes and human-like feet, hands and teeth. [Email to a friend](#) | [Print](#) | [Share](#)

CNN's Doug Cross contributed to this report.

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## Birds – 2008 (Oct 9)

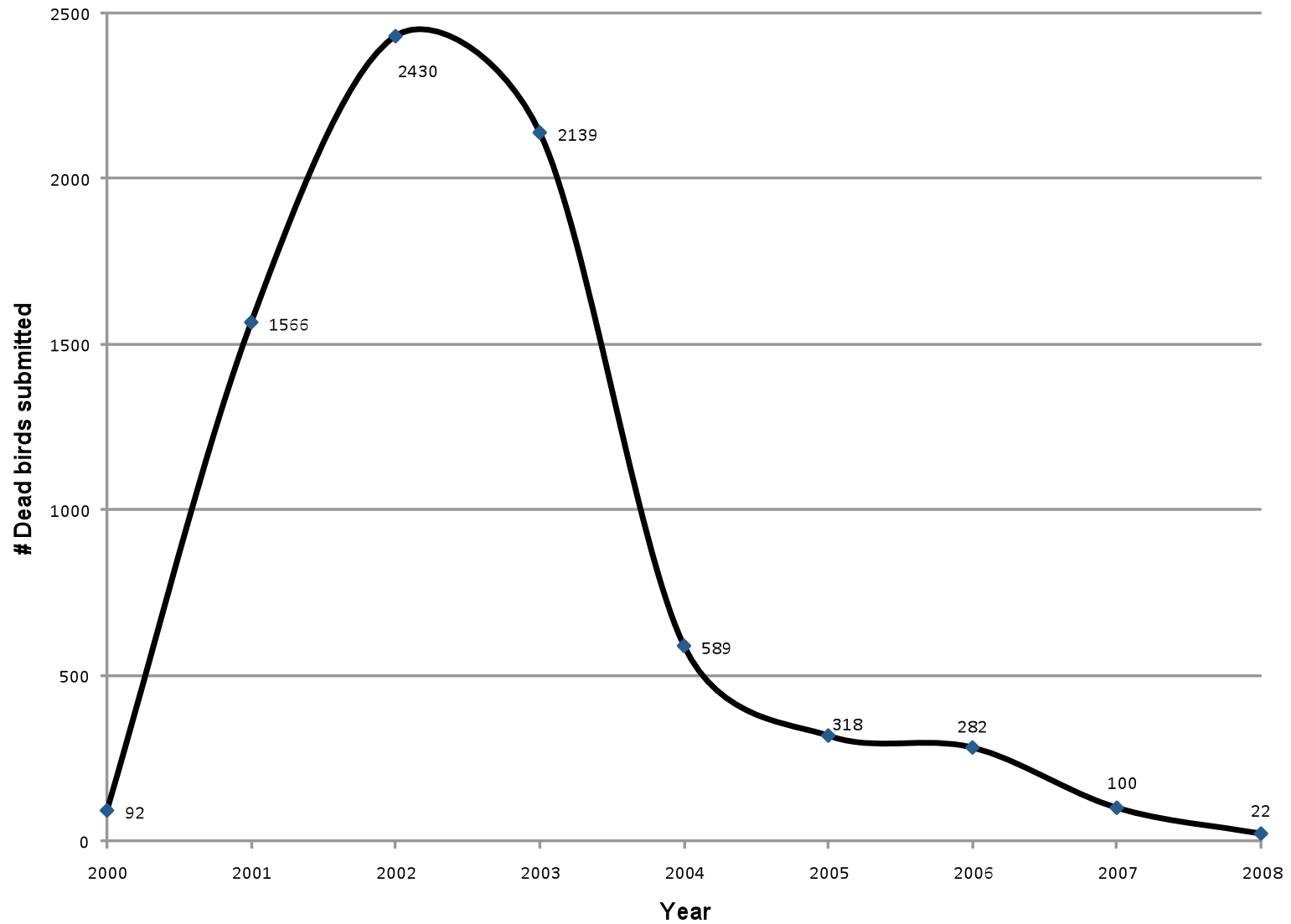
Dead birds submitted - 22

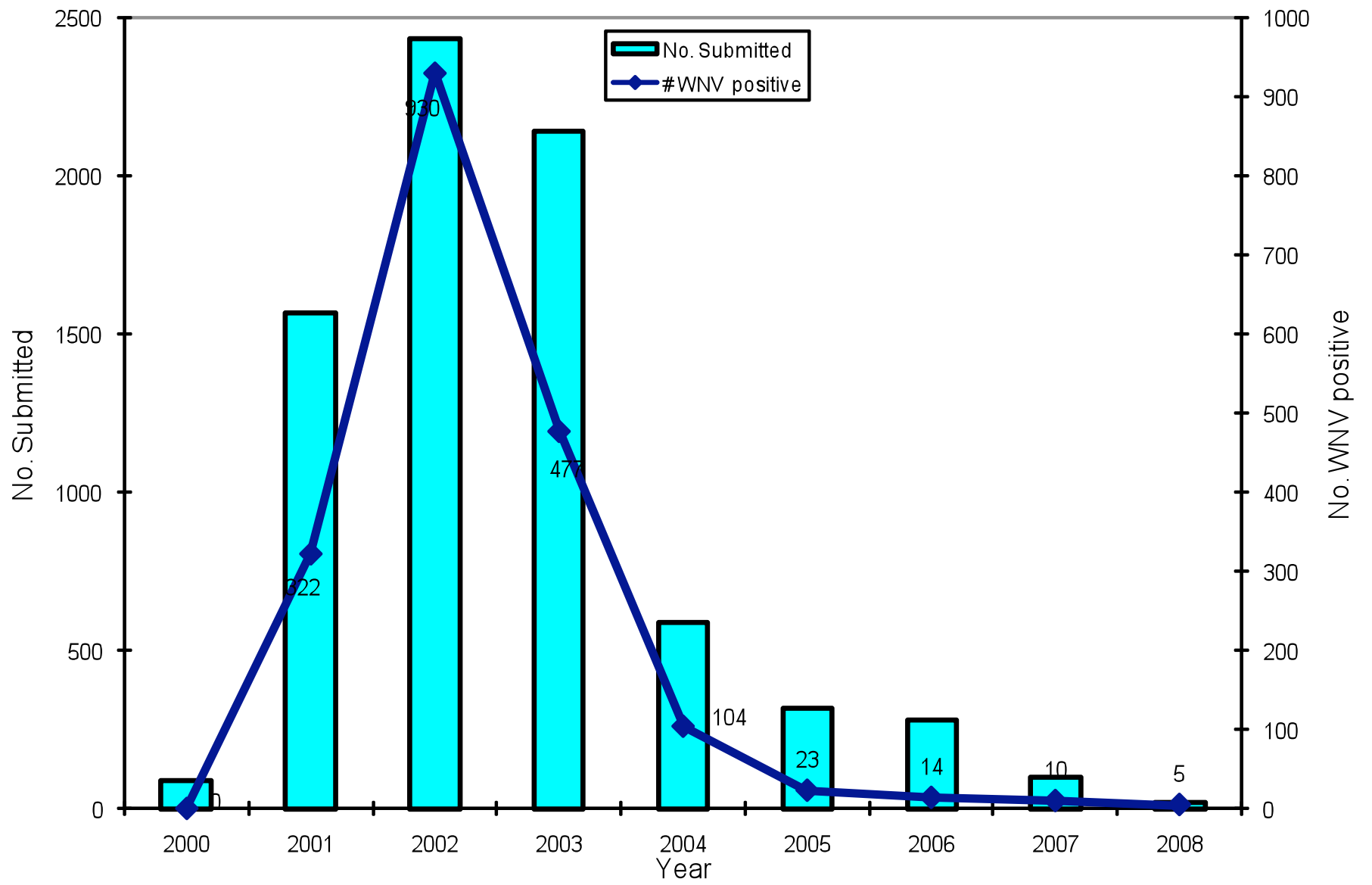
West Nile virus - 5 (DeKalb and Cobb)

American Crow – 3

Blue Jay - 2

# Dead bird submissions: 2000 – 2008 (Oct 9)





# Mosquito Pools – Jan. 1 to Oct. 9, 2008

4,301 Pools submitted

West Nile virus - 41

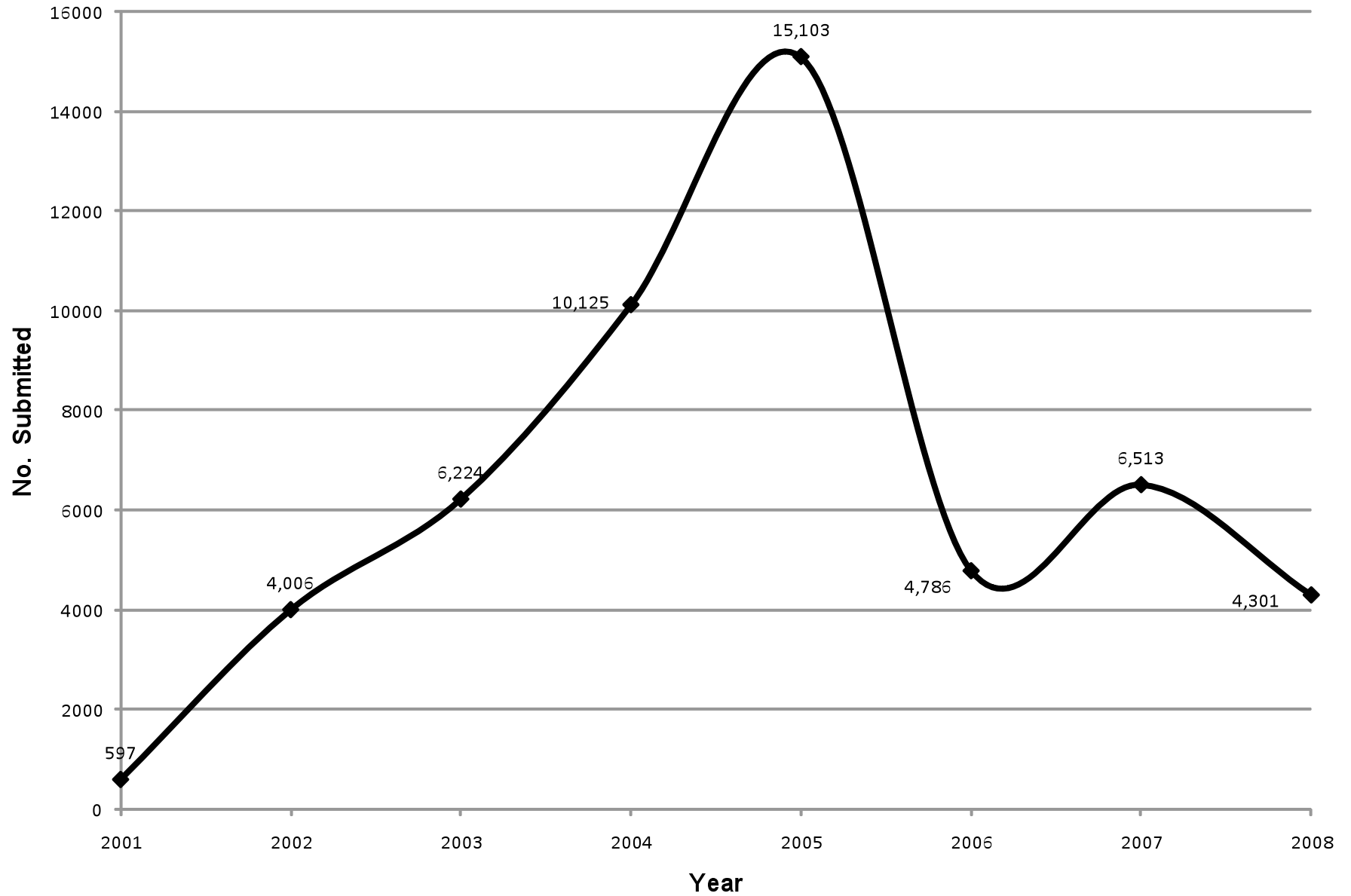
Flanders virus – 77

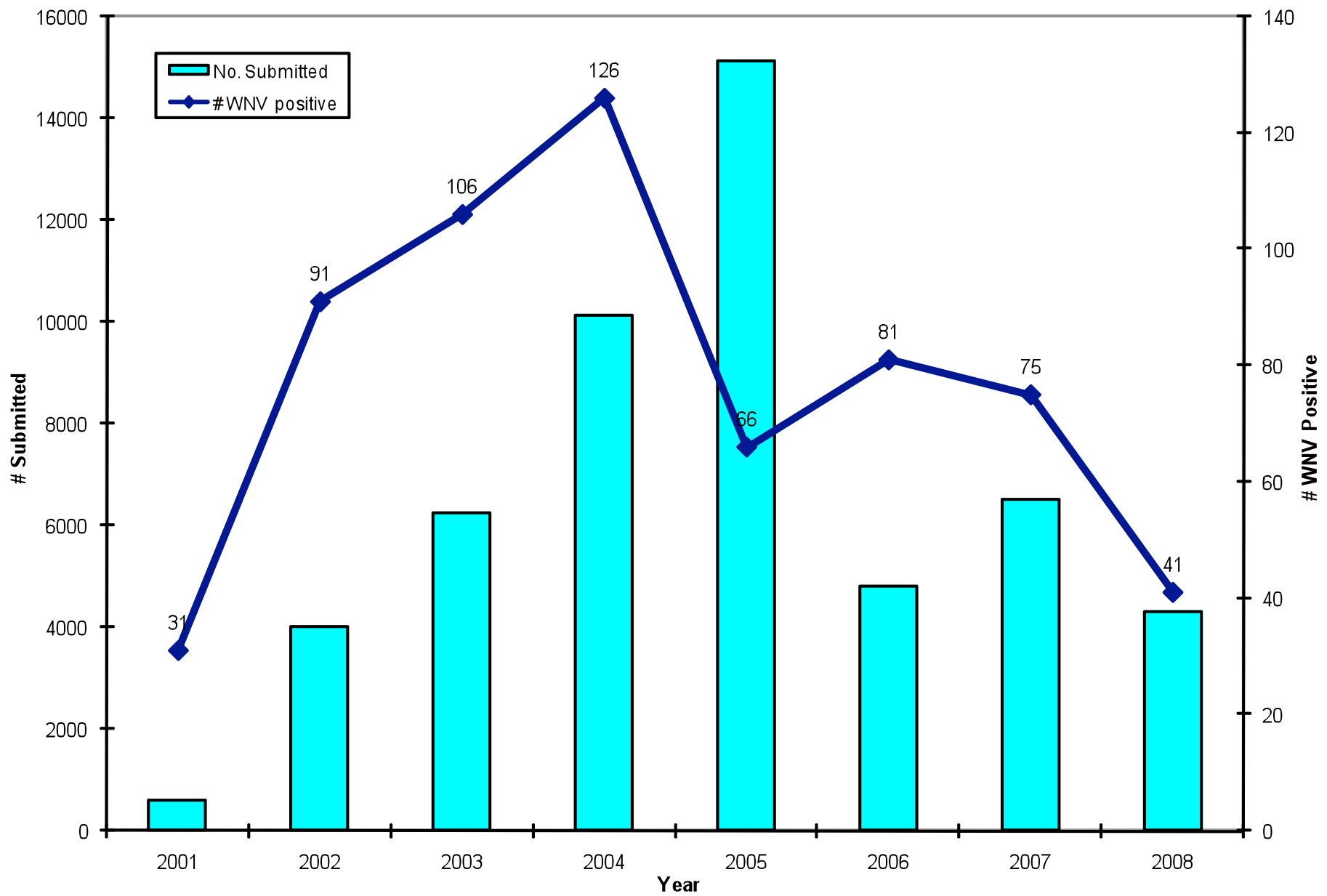
West Nile virus and Flanders virus - 1

Flanders virus variant suspects - 5

EEE virus - 1

# Mosquito pool submissions: 2001-2008 (Oct 9)







# Viruses detected – 2000 to 2008

## Dead Birds

West Nile virus – 1,885

EEE virus - 24

Flanders virus - 1

HJ virus - 4

ND virus - 3

Uncharacterized Rhabdovirus - 1

## Mosquito Pools

West Nile virus - 617

EEE virus – 9

Flanders virus - 404

Keystone virus – 2

South River virus - 2

Potosi virus - 2

Cache Valley virus - 6

LaCrosse virus - 1

HJ virus - 6

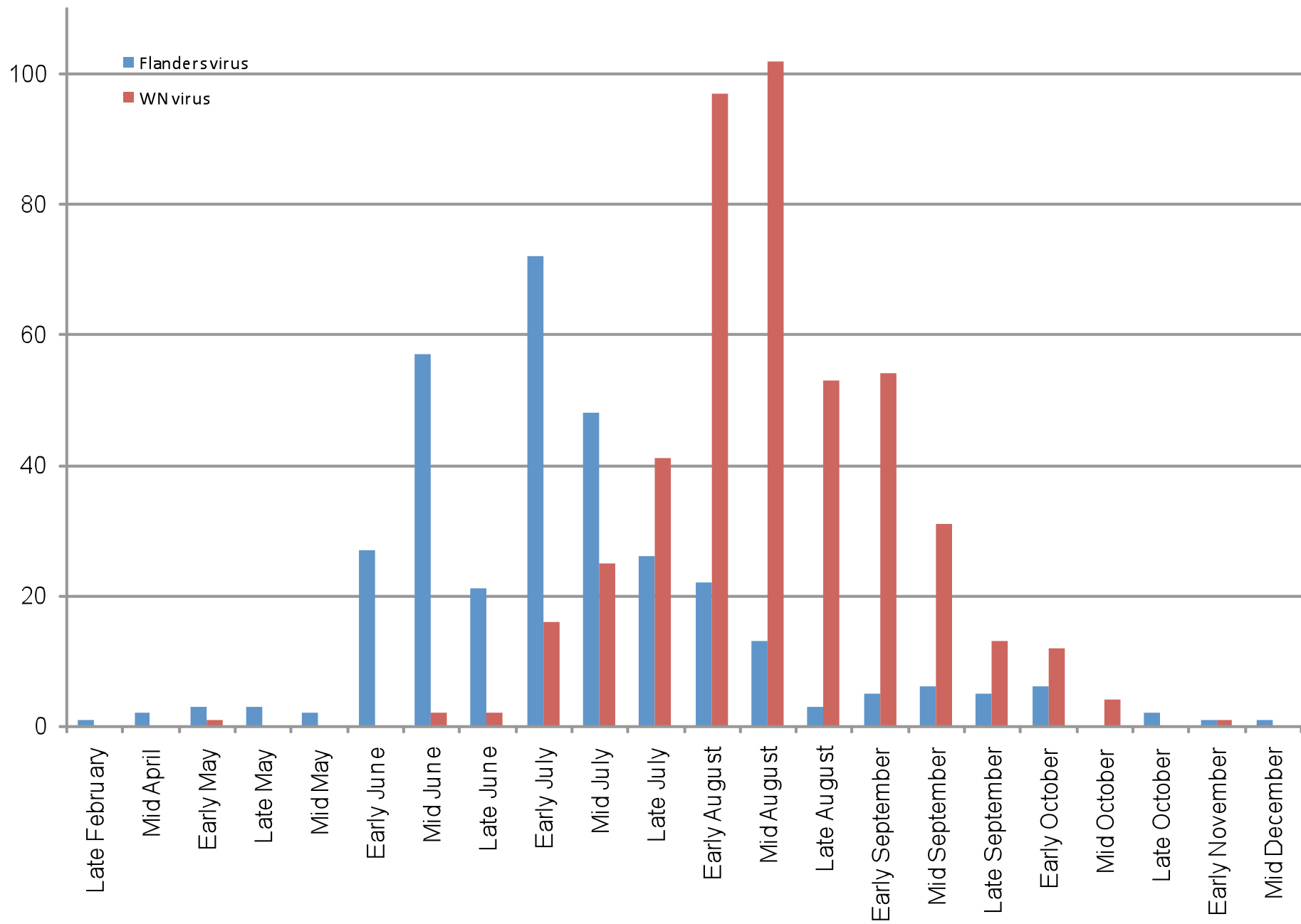
Flanders virus variant - 6

Uncharacterized Reovirus - 1


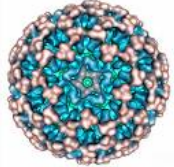
# Where do we go from here?

## **Arbovirus Surveillance**

*“the organized monitoring of levels of virus activity, vector populations, infections in vertebrate hosts, human cases, weather, and other factors to detect or predict changes in the transmission dynamics of arboviruses”*



# New Findings

- New to Georgia
  - South River virus (*An. punctipennis*)
- New to science
  - Uncharacterized Rhabdovirus (American coot)  

  - Uncharacterized Orbivirus (*Oc. taeniorhynchus*)  

  - Flanders virus variant (various species)