

Animal Bites and Rabies

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Zoonotic Disease Program

June 12, 2025

2025 Infectious Disease and Immunization Summit

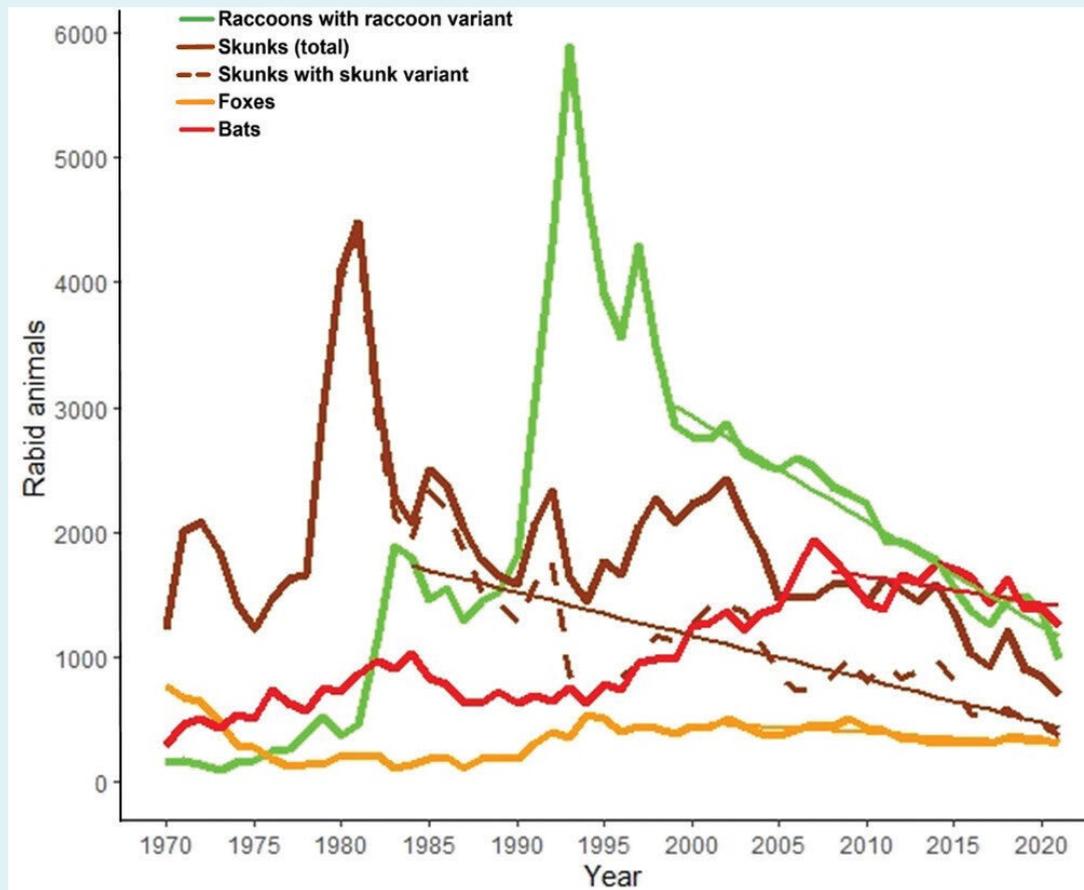


- Provide an introduction to rabies.
- Discuss management of human exposures to animals.
 - Provide guidance on animal submissions to the Office of Laboratory Services (OLS) for rabies testing.
 - Provide rabies post-exposure prophylaxis guidance.
 - Highlight important information required for animal bite investigations.
- Discuss management of animal exposures to other animals.

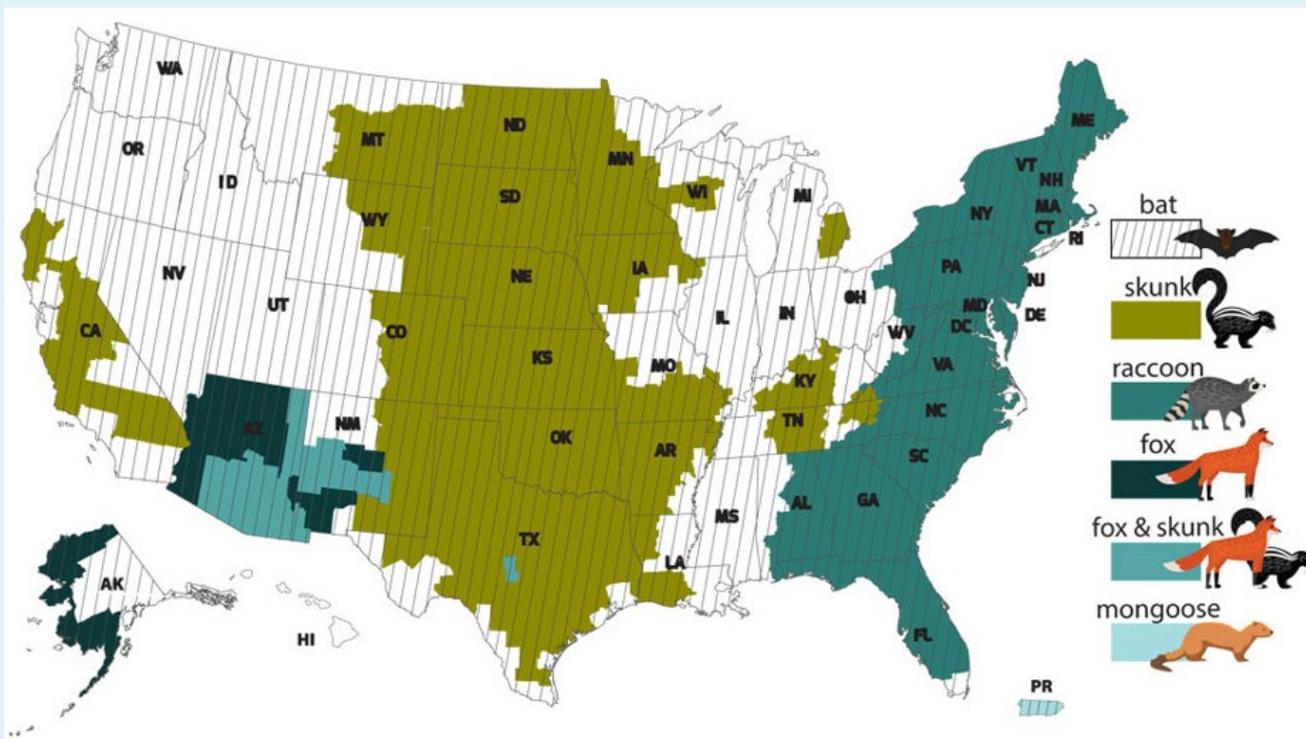
- Zoonotic disease in the *Lyssavirus* genus.
- Incubation period may vary from a few days to several years but is typically one to three months.
- The virus is mostly transmitted through the bite of a rabid animal.
- Non-bite exposures can occur.
 - Being scratched by a rabid animal.
 - Scratches, abrasions, open wounds mucous membranes contaminated with saliva or infectious material.
 - Inhalation of aerosolized rabies virus (laboratory workers).
 - Human-to-human transmission: cornea and organ transplants.
 - Eight documented reports.

- **SYMPTOMS**
- **First symptoms of rabies are similar to the flu.**
 - General weakness, discomfort, fever, or headache.
- **Progression to cerebral dysfunction.**
 - Anxiety, delirium, hallucinations, and insomnia.
- **Rabies is almost always fatal, and treatment is typically supportive.**
 - <10 documented cases of human survival.

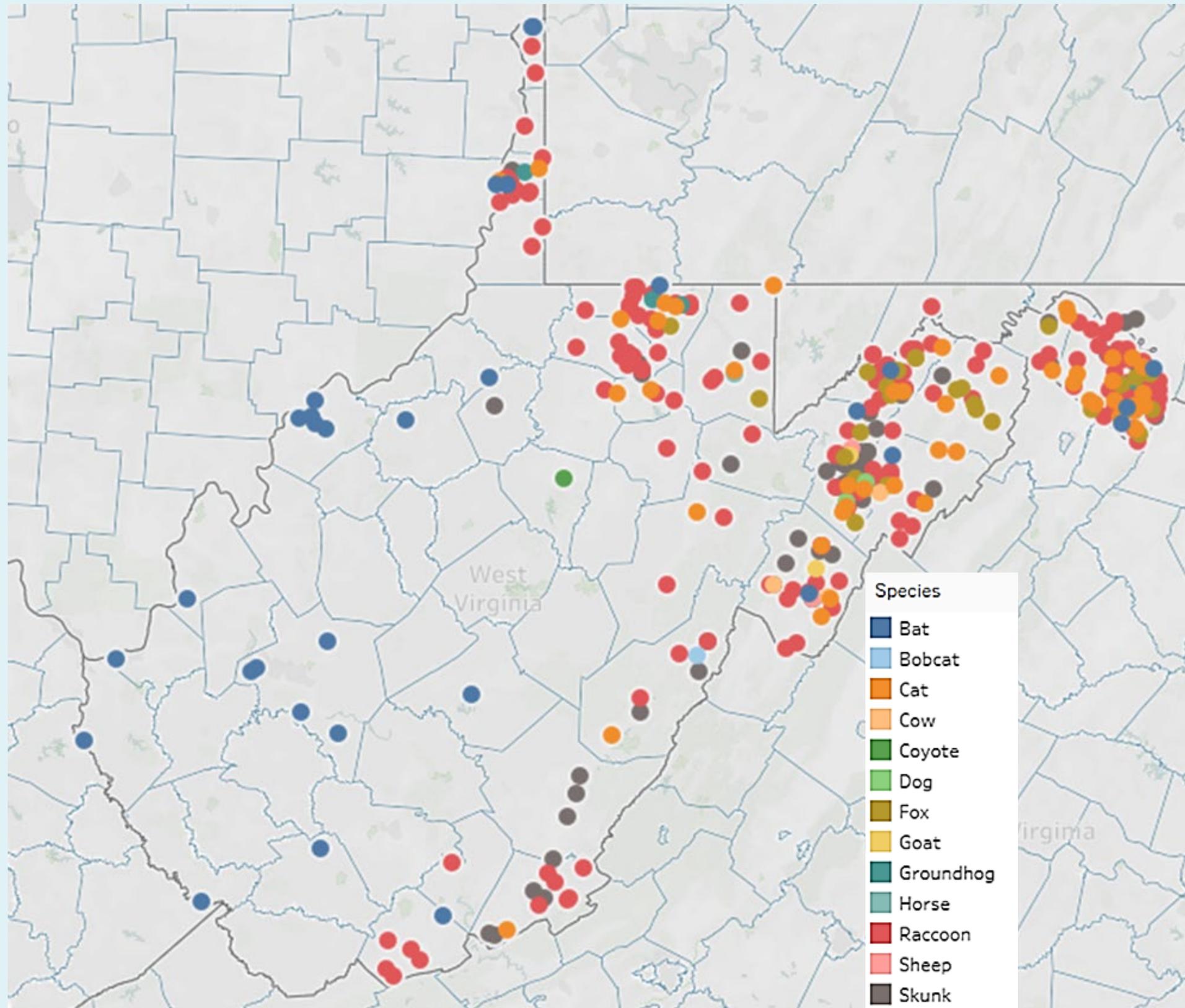
Animal Rabies in the United States



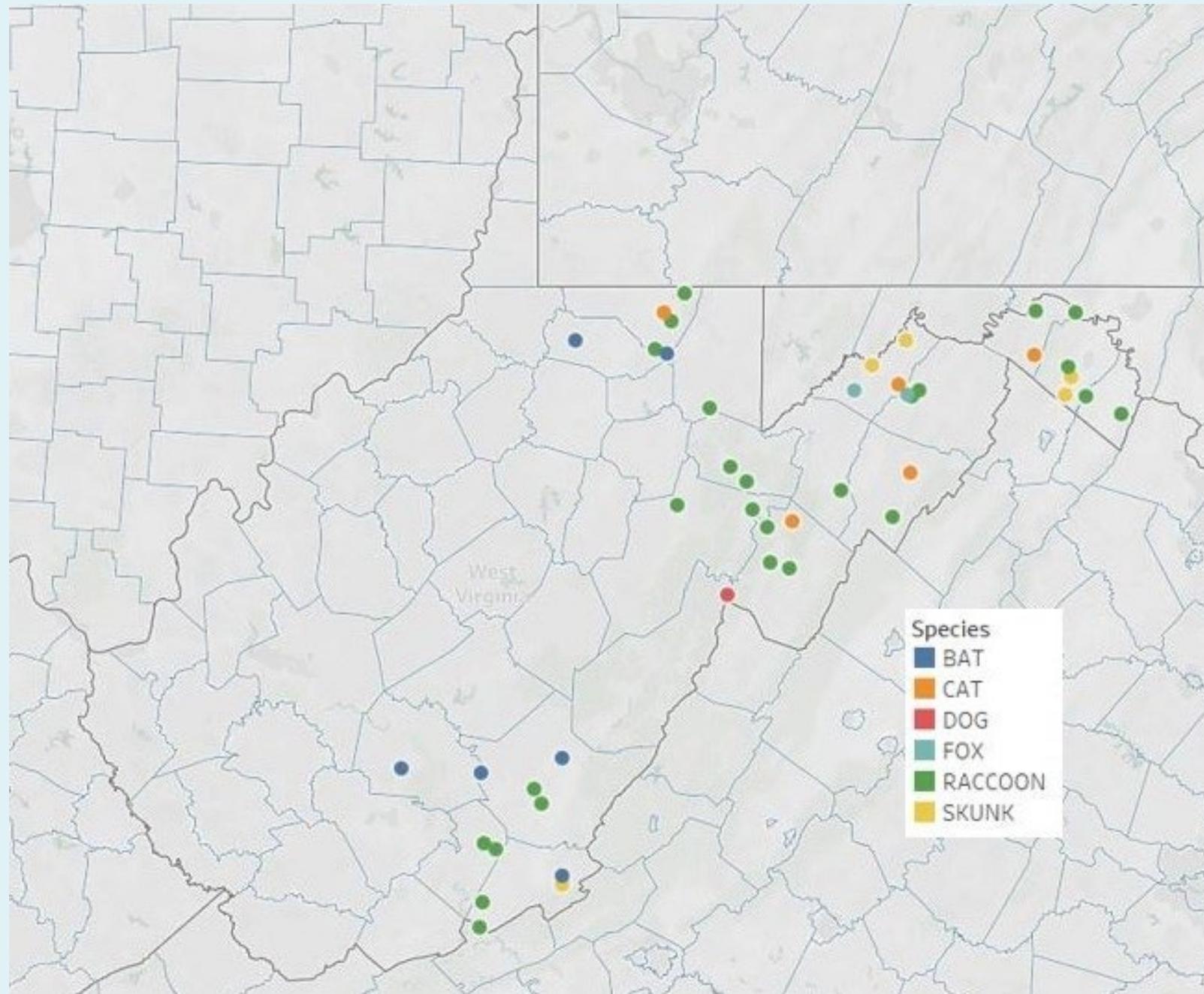
- Overall, the incidence of rabies-positive animals has been decreasing.
- More bats are positive for rabies than other animal species in the United States.
- The United States can be divided into areas of terrestrial rabies virus variants.



Animal Rabies, West Virginia 2013-2022

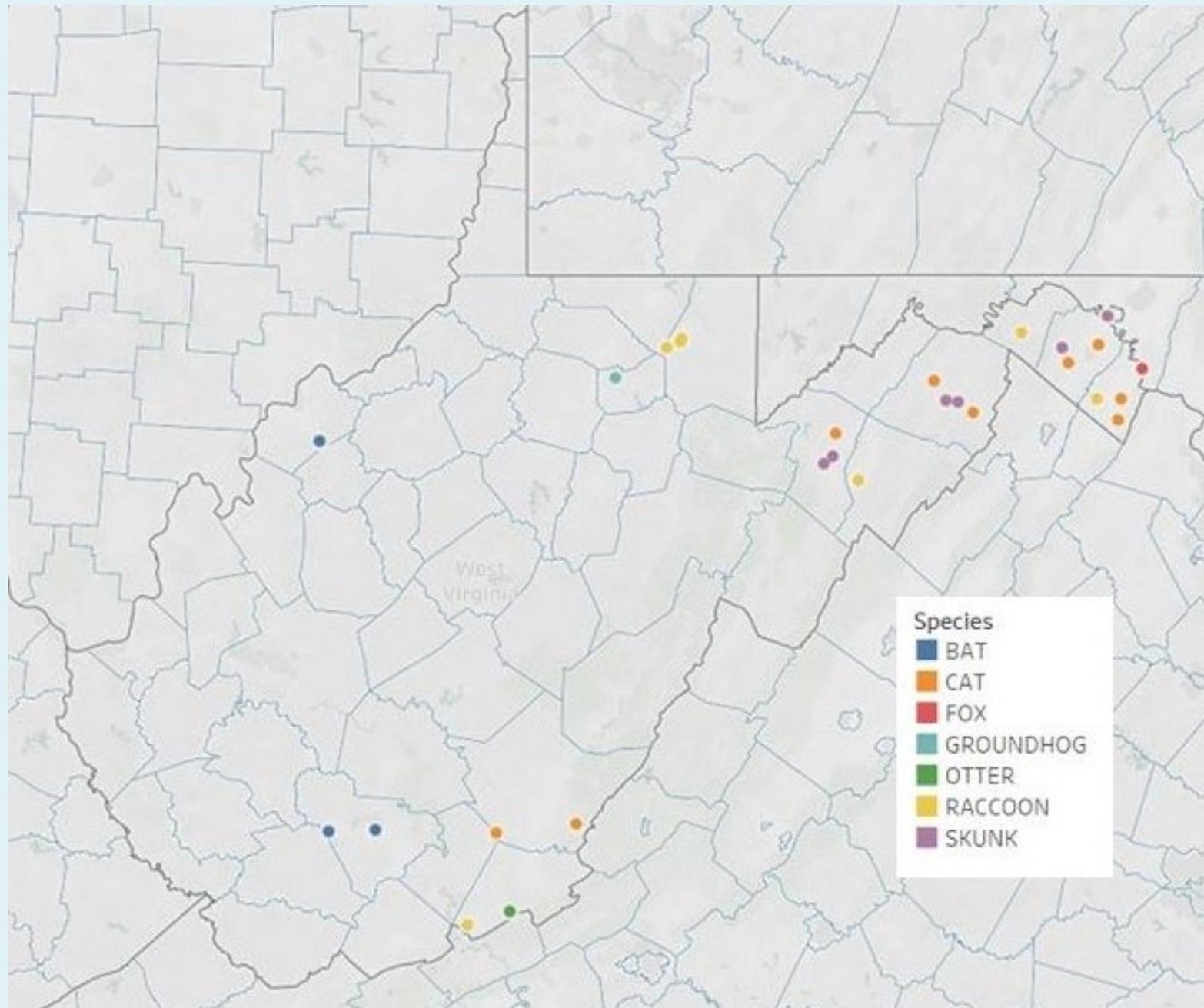


Animal Rabies, West Virginia 2023



- 46 counties submitted animals for testing through OLS.
- 17 counties had rabies positive animals.
- 509 animals were tested for rabies through OLS.
- 36 tested positive (7.1%) for rabies.
 - Raccoons (17), bats (6), cats (5), skunks (5), foxes (2), dog (1).

Animal Rabies, West Virginia 2024



- **51 counties submitted animals for testing through OLS.**
- 12 counties had rabies positive animals.
- **494 animals were tested for rabies through OLS.**
- 26 tested positive (5.3%) for rabies.
 - Cats (9), skunks (6), raccoons (5), bats (3), fox (1), otter (1), groundhog (1).

Animal Bites and the Other Potential Rabies Exposure's (OPRE) Surveillance

The following information is taken from the 2010 Rabies Control Guide (DC-4)

Animal Bites and OPREs Surveillance (cont'd)

- In West Virginia, animal bites and OPREs should be reported to local health department (LHD) within 24 hours.
- **Why are we reporting animal bites?**
 - Rabies prevention (in humans and animals).
 - Educate the public and providers.
 - Gather data (surveillance).
 - Understand local rabies epidemiology.
 - Targeting interventions.
- **Animal bites/OPREs should be reported in West Virginia Electronic Disease Surveillance System (WVEDSS).**

Animal Bites

Human Exposure

A bite or scratch from a vector species or the introduction of saliva or central nervous system (CNS) tissue from a vector species into an open, fresh wound, or mucous membrane (eye, mouth, or nose) of a human being.

Vector Species

Species include bats or terrestrial mammals, especially carnivores.

Wild species known to be reservoirs of rabies include, but are not limited to, raccoons, skunks, foxes, coyotes, bobcats, wolves, or any hybrids between these wild species and domestic dogs and cats.

Domestic species include, but are not limited to, dogs, cats, and ferrets.

Confirmed case: Human exposure from a vector species as defined above.

Before Conducting an Investigation

- **Was there an exposure?**
 - Based on the case definition.
- **Is the victim a West Virginia resident?**
 - If not, send animal bite/OPRE information to the state where the patient resides.
- **Was the exposing animal a mammal?**
 - Only mammalian species transmit rabies.

What Should NOT be Reported?

- Human exposures to non-mammalian species.
 - Reptiles and birds do not transmit rabies.
- Animal exposure to potentially rabid animals.
 - Human patient-centric reporting.
- Non-exposures.
 - e.g., touching an animal's fur, picking up an animal, contact with blood or feces of an animal.

Animal to Human Exposures

Species of Exposing Animal - Dog/Cat/Ferret

Dogs, cats, and ferrets are the only animals that have an established observation period.

- Should be confined for 10 days by the owner, veterinarian, or animal control officer (regardless of ownership or vaccination status).
- Recommendations regarding PEP administration should be made after confinement period.

Rules of confinement for cats, dogs, and ferrets:

- The animal should **NOT** be killed, sold, released, given away, or vaccinated during the confinement period.
- Any illness should be reported immediately to the LHD.
- Confirm the status of the animal after the confinement period.
- If the animal develops signs of rabies ☐ immediately euthanize and test.

Species of Exposing Animal - Dog/Cat/Ferret (cont'd)

Immediate euthanasia and testing of the animal.

- A severe bite on the head, face, or neck.
- Bites that result in hospitalization/death.
- An animal with a history of aggressive behavior and biting.

If the animal is not available for confinement and/or testing (e.g. stray), physician should evaluate the patient to determine the need for PEP with assistance from state and local health officials.

Confinement and Strict Isolation

CONFINEMENT (for dogs, cats, and ferrets only): housing in a building, pen, or some other escape-proof enclosure.

- Tying the animal in an open yard is not adequate.
- The animal may not be removed from the premises without permission from the LHD.
- The animal should not be permitted to run at large.
- The animal should be closely monitored during confinement.

STRICT ISOLATION: A kennel in a veterinary hospital, animal control facility, commercial boarding establishment, or a pen at home that prevents direct contact between the animal and any human or other animal, but allows for observation, feeding, watering, and sanitation.

- Sanitarian is responsible for approval isolation area.

Species of Exposing Animal - Other Pets

Other pets include small mammals such as hamsters, gerbils, rats, mice, rabbits, guinea pigs, etc.

- No available rabies vaccine for these animals.
- They pose a low risk for rabies transmission and their bites almost never require rabies post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP).
- *Only mammals can transmit rabies. Other classes of owned animals, such as birds, reptiles, amphibians, fish and invertebrates pose no risk for rabies transmission.*

Species of Exposing Animal - Exotic Pets

- No established rabies observation period.
- Vaccination may reduce the risk of rabies but does not eliminate it in these species.
- When a person is bitten by an exotic pet ☐ consider the animal factors.
 - Is the animal a mammal?
- The decision for PEP should be made on case-by-case situation, and local and state health officials should be consulted for guidance.

Species of Exposing Animal - Monkeys

- Monkeys can be dangerous animals and should NOT be kept as pets.
- No rabies observation period.
- Consider the animal factors.
 - If rabies is a concern ☐ euthanize and test or consider PEP if owner refuses testing.
- Monkey bites have an additional risk for transmitting Herpes B virus.
 - Only for macaques.

Species of Exposing Animal - Macaque

- Macaque monkeys are thought to be the natural host for the virus.
- Macaques infected with B virus usually show no symptoms.
- Infection in macaques can only be transmitted during active viral shedding through body fluids.
- Infection with B virus is extremely rare in humans but can result in severe brain damage or death if the patient is not treated soon after exposure.
- Infection in humans is typically caused by animal bites or scratches or by mucosal contact with body fluid or tissue.



- Disease onset in B virus–infected humans typically occurs within one month of exposure, although the actual incubation period can be as little as three to seven days. Symptoms associated with B virus infection include:
 - Vesicular (small blister) skin lesions at or near the site of exposure
 - Localized neurologic symptoms (pain, numbness, itching) near the wound site
 - Flu-like aches and pains
 - Fever and chills
 - Headaches lasting more than 24 hours
 - Fatigue
 - Muscular incoordination
 - Shortness of breath
- Initial symptoms include fever, headache, and vesicular skin lesions at the site of exposure. Neurologic symptoms vary. Respiratory involvement and death can occur one day to three weeks after symptom onset.

Species of Exposing Animal - Livestock

Cattle, Horses, Sheep, Goats, and Pigs

- Do not pose high risk for transmitting rabies.
- All exposures involving livestock should be reported to West Virginia Department of Agriculture.
- The animal may be kept under observation for 14 days.
 - Shedding period of virus in the saliva is unknown.
- Consider euthanasia and testing of the animal or PEP for the exposure victim.
- Always consult with your Regional Epidemiologist and Division of Communicable Diseases (DCDE) staff.

Species of Exposing Animal - Wildlife

Raccoons, Foxes, Groundhogs, Skunks, Coyotes, and Bobcats

- Should be considered rabid unless proven negative by testing.
- LHD should be notified immediately.
- Confinement and observation is NOT an option.
- Animal is available ☐ euthanize and test.
- Animal is not available ☐ strongly recommend PEP.
- State laws prohibit importation, distribution, or keeping of wild animals or hybrids as pets.

Species of Exposing Animal - Bat

- The majority of human cases of rabies in the United States were caused by bats.
- In all cases of human exposure, if possible, the bat should be safely collected and tested.
- PEP should be considered for all types of bat exposure unless the bat is tested negative.
- Always recommend seeking medical care in conditions where there is a potential exposure even with no visible wound.

Species of Exposing Animal - Bat (cont'd)

- Any bat that is active by day, is found in a place where bats are not usually seen, or is unable to fly, is likely to be rabid.
- Whenever possible, the bat should be captured, but it is best not to handle it.
- Suspect bat exposures are likely.
 - Awakening in a room with a bat.
 - Seeing a bat in the room of an unattended child.
 - Seeing bat near mentally impaired/intoxicated person.
- You cannot get rabies from having contact with bat guano, blood, urine, or from touching its fur.

Type of Exposure

Only saliva and brain/nervous system tissues are considered infectious material.

- Bite exposure: penetration of the skin by an animal's teeth. All mammal bites represent a potential rabies exposure.
- Non-bite exposure: the contamination of open, fresh wound and/or mucous membrane by infectious material from a rabid animal.
- Non-exposure: petting, handling an animal or contact with blood, urine, or feces.

Circumstances of Exposure

Getting information about circumstances of the exposure can guide public health recommendations.

- Is the animal vaccinated/up-to-date on vaccinations?
- How was the animal acting at time of exposure?
- Is the animal housed indoors or outdoors?
- In what county did the exposure occur?
 - Can use local rabies epidemiology for risk assessment.

West Virginia Reportable Disease Rule §64-7-5

- If a person is bitten, scratched, or otherwise exposed to an animal which has or is suspected of having rabies, then the incident, including the person's full name, date of birth, and address, **shall be reported to the local health officer within 24 hours** by phone, or preferably by WVEDSS, by the following individuals:
 - Physician or other healthcare provider caring for the person
 - Veterinarian or animal healthcare provider
 - Person bitten, scratched, or otherwise exposed
 - Whoever is caring for the bite victim
 - Parent or guardian and the victim is a child
- The **local health officer shall report within 24 hours to the commissioner** the name, date of birth, address, circumstances of exposure, and action taken for every person bitten, scratched, or otherwise exposed to an animal which has or is suspected of having rabies.

- If the animal is a **domestic dog, cat, or ferret**, the **local health officer shall make a reasonable attempt to determine the animal's owner**, and if successful, shall direct the owner to **confine the animal for a period of ten days**. The owner of the domestic dog cat or ferret, county humane officer, dog warden or sheriff shall notify the local health officer , county humane officer, dog warden or sheriff immediately if the domestic animal shows symptoms compatible with rabies or dies, and the local health officer, county humane officer, dog warden or sheriff shall arrange for appropriate examination of the animal's brain at the OLS.
- If the **local health officer cannot determine the owner of the domestic dog, cat or ferret**, he or she shall **direct the county humane officer, dog warden or sheriff to pick up the suspected dog, cat or ferret, that has bitten a person and confine it in isolation for ten days**. If the animal shows symptoms compatible with rabies, including if the animal bit someone without provocation, or if the animal demonstrates aggressive behavior toward human beings such that the animal may pose a continuing risk to other people, the local health officer shall direct the county humane officer, dog warden, sheriff, or other designee to humanely destroy the animal and arrange for appropriate examination of the animal's brain. If the animal dies, the local health officer shall arrange for the appropriate examination of the animal's brain at the OLS.

- If a person is reported bitten by any animal having or suspected of having rabies other than a domestic dog cat or ferret, especially by a wild mammal or hybrid, the local health officer may direct the county humane officer, dog warden, sheriff, or other designee to have the **animal humanely destroyed immediately** and to arrange appropriate examination of the animal's brain at the OLS.
- Any person who becomes aware of the existence of an animal apparently afflicted with rabies shall report the existence of the animal, the place where it was last seen, the owner's name, if known, and the symptoms suggesting rabies **to the local health officer immediately**.
- Healthcare providers, health care facilities, local health officers and other facilities administering rabies pre-exposure (PrEP) vaccination or PEP shall report vaccinations and treatment administered to WVEDSS.

Submitting Animal Heads for Testing

- **Notify OLS in advance of submitting a specimen for rabies testing.**
- Kit is designed to hold the severed head of moderate-sized animals but can hold the BRAIN ONLY of larger-sized animals (e.g., cow, horse).
- Complete all required information legibly on the Specimen Submission Form.
- No living animals will be accepted for rabies testing.
 - Animals should be euthanized humanely.
- Specimens brought to OLS after work hours can be placed in the dock refrigerator.
- Call OLS Rabies Unit if you have any questions.

Submitting Animal Heads for Testing (cont'd)

- **More information:**
 - Specimen must be received within seven days of euthanasia to be tested.
 - OLS accepts animals regardless of exposure (human, pet/domestic animal, combination of both).
 - Specimens brought to the OLS after work hours can be placed in the refrigerator located in the building outside the back parking lot. The Rabies Unit **MUST** be notified to receive further instructions.

Submitting Animal Heads for Testing (cont'd)

Safety Precautions

- Wear rubber gloves, face mask, safety goggles or face shield, plastic apron or other suitable removable outer garment such as coveralls.
- Disinfect the surface area used for head removal.
- Consult a physician immediately if a self-inflicted wound occurs during head removal.

Submitting Animal Heads for Testing (cont'd)

OFFICE OF LABORATORY SERVICES
 Andrea M. Latik, Sc.D. / Director
 167 11th Avenue
 South Charleston, WV 25303
 (304) 959-3530
 Fax (304) 959-2098 or 6210

PLACE BARCODE HERE
 OLS USE ONLY

RABIES LABORATORY SPECIMEN SUBMISSION FORM

SUBMITTER INFORMATION

FACILITY NAME		MAILING ADDRESS	
COUNTY	CITY	STATE	ZIP
ATTENTION TO:		BUSINESS HOURS PHONE NO.	
FAX NO.		AFTER HOURS PHONE NO.	

Species _____ If a domestic animal, what is current vaccination status?
 Current None Expired Unknown

DATE COLLECTED _____

Date of Animal Death: _____ How did animal die? _____ Was the animal buried before brain removal?
 Yes No

Animal Wild or Owned?
 Not Owned/Wild/Stray Owned (Name of Owner _____) Phone # of Owner _____

Address Where Found _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

County Where Found _____ GIS Coordinates
 Latitude _____ Longitude _____

Name of Person Sample Received From: _____ Telephone _____

Occupation (check ONE only):
 Animal Control Officer Veterinarian Police Wildlife Officer Private Citizen County Health Official Other _____

Reason for Testing (Check ALL That Apply):
 Human Exposure Other _____ Surveillance:
 Pet/Domestic Animal Exposure (Specify: _____) Found Dead/Roadkill Odd Behavior

COMPLETE FOR ORAL RABIES VACCINATION PROGRAM ONLY

Animal Number _____ | Data Collected By (County) _____ | Brainstem Specimen Collected By (County) _____

HUMAN EXPOSURE No Yes (if yes, please complete the following:)

Name of Exposed	Address of Exposed	Phone # of Exposed
Exposure Type <input type="checkbox"/> Bite <input type="checkbox"/> Scratch <input type="checkbox"/> Contact Saliva <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	Location of Wound	Post-Exposure Prophylaxis Started? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

PET/DOMESTIC ANIMAL EXPOSURE No Yes (if yes, please complete the following:)

Type of Animal Exposed <input type="checkbox"/> Dog <input type="checkbox"/> Cat <input type="checkbox"/> Livestock <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	Vaccination Status of Exposed Animal <input type="checkbox"/> Current <input type="checkbox"/> Expired <input type="checkbox"/> None <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown
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COMMENTS: _____

ACC: _____
 DE: _____
 CVD: _____

FAILURE TO COMPLETE THIS FORM IN ITS ENTIRETY MAY RESULT IN DELAYED TEST RESULTS

Rev: 04/2025

SUBMITTER INFORMATION

FACILITY NAME		
COUNTY		
ATTENTION TO:		
FAX NO.		

MAILING ADDRESS		
CITY	STATE	ZIP
BUSINESS HOURS PHONE NO.		
AFTER HOURS PHONE NO.		

Species	If a domestic animal, what is current vaccination status? <input type="checkbox"/> Current <input type="checkbox"/> None <input type="checkbox"/> Expired <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown	DATE COLLECTED
Date of Animal Death:	How did animal die?	Was the animal buried before brain removal? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Animal Wild or Owned? <input type="checkbox"/> Not Owned/Wild/Stray <input type="checkbox"/> Owned (Name of Owner _____)	Phone # of Owner _____	
Address Where Found	City	State Zip
County Where Found	GIS Coordinates Latitude _____ Longitude _____	
Name of Person Sample Received From:		Telephone
Occupation (check ONE only): <input type="checkbox"/> Animal Control Officer <input type="checkbox"/> Veterinarian <input type="checkbox"/> Police <input type="checkbox"/> Wildlife Officer <input type="checkbox"/> Private Citizen <input type="checkbox"/> County Health Official <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____		
Reason for Testing (Check ALL That Apply): <input type="checkbox"/> Human Exposure <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ Surveillance: <input type="checkbox"/> Pet/Domestic Animal Exposure (Specify: _____) <input type="checkbox"/> Found Dead/Roadkill <input type="checkbox"/> Odd Behavior		

HUMAN EXPOSURE No Yes (if yes, please complete the following:)

Name of Exposed	Address of Exposed	Phone # of Exposed
Exposure Type <input type="checkbox"/> Bite <input type="checkbox"/> Scratch <input type="checkbox"/> Contact Saliva <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	Location of Wound	Post-Exposure Prophylaxis Started? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

PET/DOMESTIC ANIMAL EXPOSURE No Yes (if yes, please complete the following:)

Type of Animal Exposed <input type="checkbox"/> Dog <input type="checkbox"/> Cat <input type="checkbox"/> Livestock <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	Vaccination Status of Exposed Animal <input type="checkbox"/> Current <input type="checkbox"/> Expired <input type="checkbox"/> None <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown
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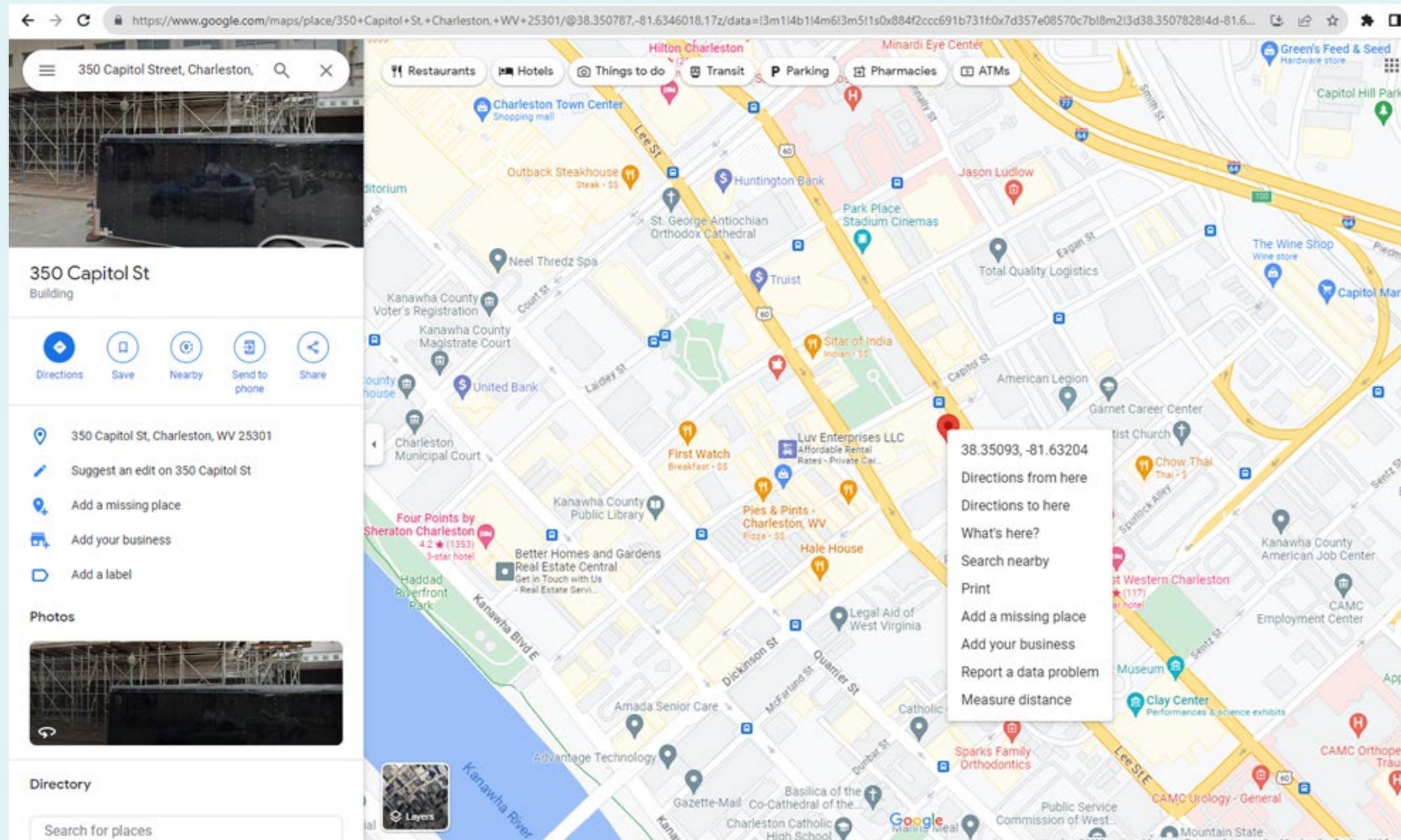
Geographic Information System (GIS) Coordinates



- **Report GIS coordinates in decimal degrees, if possible.**
 - e.g., 38.350294, -81.632216
- **You can use Google Maps to determine coordinates of a location.**
 - Enter address.
 - Right click on location.
 - Coordinates will be listed above “Directions from here”.

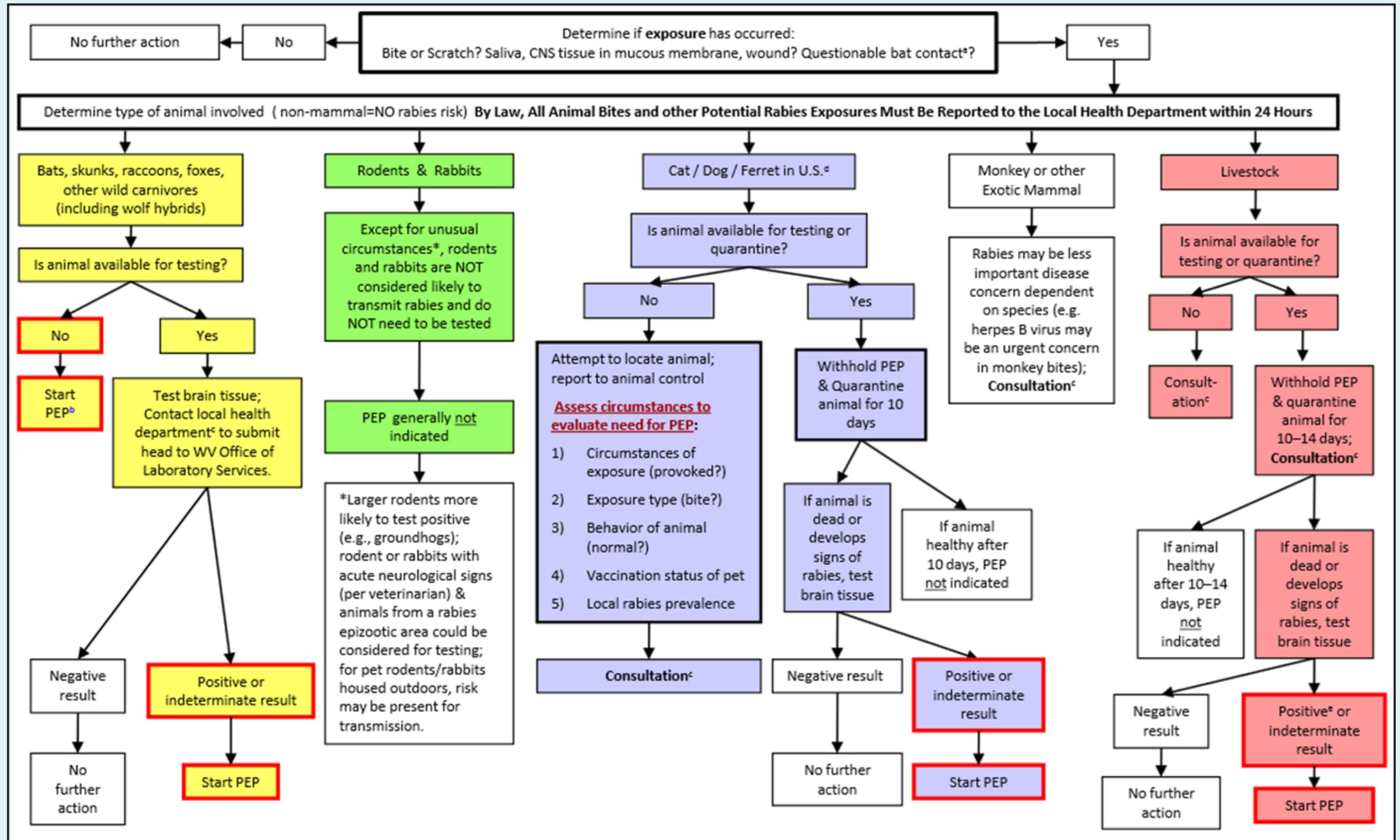
GIS Coordinates (cont'd)

- Report GIS coordinates in decimal degrees, if possible.
- e.g., 38.350294, -81.632216



Coordinate data are used to generate animal rabies surveillance maps.

PEP Risk Assessment



PEP Recommendations

PEP for Immunocompetent Person not Previously Immunized					
PRODUCT	ROUTE	SITE	DOSAGE	DOSES	SCHEDULE
HRIG	Around bite; Excess intramuscularly	Wound; Gluteus or anterolateral thigh	20 IU/kg (0.133 mL/kg)	1	Day 0
Vaccine	Intramuscularly	Deltoid ¹ ; Anterolateral thigh ²	1.0 mL	4	Day 0, 3, 7, 14
PEP for Immunocompetent Person Previously Immunized					
PRODUCT	ROUTE	SITE	DOSAGE	DOSES	SCHEDULE
HRIG	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Vaccine	Intramuscularly	Deltoid ¹ ; Anterolateral thigh ²	1.0 mL	2	Day 0, 3
PEP for Immunocompromised Persons (Previously Immunized & Not Immunized)					
PRODUCT	ROUTE	SITE	DOSAGE	DOSES	SCHEDULE
HRIG	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Vaccine	Intramuscularly	Deltoid ¹ ; Anterolateral thigh ²	1.0 mL	2	Day 0, 3
HRIG	Around bite; Excess intramuscularly	Wound; Gluteus or anterolateral thigh	20 IU/kg (0.133 mL/kg)	1	Day 0
Vaccine	Intramuscularly	Deltoid ¹ ; Anterolateral thigh ²	1.0 mL	5	Day 0, 3, 7, 14, 28

Though public health can strongly recommend rabies PEP, it is ultimately a decision that is made between the patient and his/her physician.

PEP for Immunocompetent People

- **Human Rabies Immunoglobulin (HRIG):**
 - 20 IU/Kg
 - Injected at site of exposure and intramuscularly
 - Day 0 only
- **Vaccine:**
 - 1 ml doses injected intramuscularly
 - Days 0, 3, 7, and 14

PEP for Previously Vaccinated Immunocompetent People

- **HRIG is not used**
- **Vaccine:**
 - 1 ml doses injected intramuscularly
 - Days 0 and 3

PEP for Immunocompromised

- For previously vaccinated, immunocompromised:
- HRIG is not used
- Vaccine:
 - 1 ml doses injected intramuscularly
 - Days 0 and 3

PEP for Immunocompromised (cont'd)

- **For never vaccinated, immunocompromised individuals:**
- **HRIG:**
 - 20 IU/Kg
 - Injected at site of exposure and intramuscularly
 - Day 0 only
- **Vaccine:**
 - 1 ml doses injected intramuscularly
 - Days 0, 3, 7, 14, and 28

Important Animal Bite Investigation Information

- Demographic information
 - County of residence / zip code
 - Age
 - Sex
 - Race
 - Ethnicity
- Exposure information
 - Date of exposure
 - Type of exposure
 - Bodily location of exposure
 - Exposure provoked?
- Species information
 - Species of the exposing animal
 - Classification of the animal as owned or non-owned
 - Vaccination status for owned animals

Important Animal Bite Investigation Information (cont'd)

- Known outcomes for the victim
 - PEP not indicated
 - Patient initiated PEP
 - Patient completed PEP
 - Patient hospitalization
 - Patient death
 - Patient previously vaccinated
- Known outcomes for the exposing animal
 - Animal confined
 - Animal outcome
 - Animal tested for rabies
 - Animal rabies test results

Animal to Animal Exposures

§19-20-9a. For Dogs, Cats, and Ferrets

- If any unvaccinated domesticated animal is bitten by a rabid animal, the owner shall confine the bitten animal for a period of six months. The animal should be vaccinated at time of entry into confinement. Every effort should be made to vaccinate the animal within 96 hours of exposure.
 - Primary recommendation is euthanasia.
- Vaccinated domestic animals are revaccinated, confined, and observed for 45 days.
- “If the animal is not confined and quarantined as directed in subsections...the humane officer, dog warden or sheriff may cause the animal to be placed in the custody and care of a licensed veterinarian...at the owner's expense.”

Management of Animal Exposures (cont'd)

DOGS, CATS, OR FERRETS WITH EXPIRED VACCINATIONS

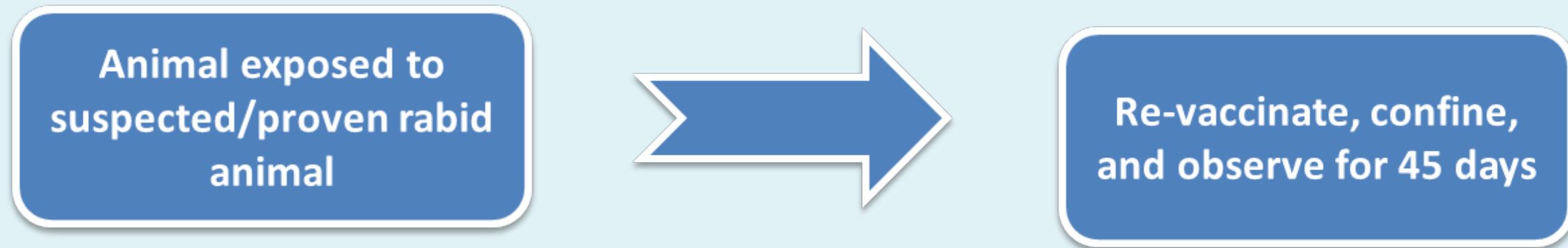
Animal exposed to
suspected/proven rabid
animal



Consider:
Severity of exposure
Time since last vaccination
of previous vaccinations
Current health status
Local rabies epidemiology

Consult with DCDE epidemiologists.

VACCINATED LIVESTOCK



- Sign of illness should be immediately evaluated by a veterinarian.
- If signs of rabies develop ☐ humanely euthanize animal and test immediately.
- If the animal dies ☐ submit brain to OLS for testing.
- Unvaccinated livestock should either be slaughtered or confined for six months.

The West Virginia Department of Agriculture should be contacted for all suspected/proven rabid animals.

WILD OR EXOTIC ANIMALS



- Zoos or research institutions may establish vaccination programs which attempt to protect valuable animals, but the programs should not replace appropriate public health activities to protect humans from rabies exposures.
- Employees who work with animals at such facilities should receive pre-exposure rabies immunizations.

Scenario #1: The Good Samaritan

A well-meaning person finds a raccoon struggling to walk along the side of the highway in Pendleton county. Thinking that the raccoon must have been struck by a car, she pulls over and attempts to pick it up to take it to an animal rescue and gets bitten. After the bite, the raccoon flees into the woods.

- How would you manage potential human exposure?

Scenario #2: The Easter Bunny

A mother from Roane County calls because her child was bitten by her pet bunny, and she's concerned about potential rabies exposure. They recently bought the rabbit for her for Easter, and don't have any information about the other rabbits from its litter or the mother. The rabbit is kept in a cage outside and there are no signs of anything getting into the cage and no visible wounds on the rabbit.

- Is rabies PEP recommended?
- What should be done about the rabbit?

Scenario #3: The Good Boy

A dairy farmer calls and says that a coyote attacked a calf on his farm. While he went to get his gun to take care of the coyote, the family dog attacks the coyote and fights it off. The coyote was never found. The dog is not vaccinated, but every cow on the farm was.

- How would you manage cow exposure(s)?
- How would you manage the dog?

Scenario #4: The Chew Toy

A woman calls and says she found her cat playing with a live bat in her kitchen in the middle of the afternoon. She states that she tried to take the bat away from the cat but was scratched in the process. She was unsure if any saliva from the bat got into the wounds and states that the cat has been laying on her child's lap since the incident took place. The cat is up to date on vaccine and the bat later tested positive for rabies.

- How would you manage potential human exposure(s)?
- How would you manage potential animal exposure?

Scenario #5: The Monkey's Tale

A man goes to a bar and takes his pet macaque. While at the bar, the monkey becomes agitated, breaks free from his owner and proceeds to bite three of the bar patrons. The owner claims the monkey is up to date on all shots.

- How would you manage potential human exposure(s)?
- What should be done with the monkey?

Contact Information



Eric Dotseth

State Public Health Entomologist
West Virginia Department of Health
Bureau for Public Health
Office of Epidemiology and Prevention Services
350 Capitol Street, Room 125
Charleston, WV 25301
Phone: (304) 558-5358
Fax: (304) 558-6335
Email: Eric.J.Dotseth@wv.gov
Website: www.oeps.wv.gov