

The Rabies Reporter

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The Rabies Reporter, a scientific newsletter about current issues in rabies research and control, is a joint effort of the Rabies Research Unit of the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources; the Rabies Laboratory at the Ottawa Laboratory (Fallowfield) of the Canadian Food Inspection Agency; and the Ontario Ministry of Health. Articles for future issues will be welcomed by the editor. The Rabies Reporter is not refereed, and should not be cited in papers intended for refereed journals. Send contributions, letters and inquiries to:

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Rabies in Ontario - January to March 2008

The first three months of 2008 were very similar to the first three months of 2007 with 18 confirmed cases during this period—down one from 2007. The cases were concentrated in southwestern Ontario—particularly Perth and Waterloo counties. This represents a slight southward movement of the disease. In 2007, the cases were much more scattered throughout southwestern Ontario occurring in Bruce, Grey, Perth, Wellington, Dufferin and Waterloo counties.

There was one rabid fox during the first quarter. This animal was from Fort Severn on the Hudson Bay coast and was discovered on New Year's day. This is an increase from 2007 when there were no rabid foxes for the entire year. Rabies is probably always present in far northern Ontario but the large land area and sporadic human population makes it difficult to determine how prevalent the disease is in these remote areas.

There were also 2 rabid dogs during the first quarter. One rabid dog was from Waterloo county. The other rabid dog originated in Perth County and was sold to a dealer in Bruce County before being sold at a flea market in Toronto. This infected pup generated a lot of media attention.

This incident emphasizes the need for vaccinating pets against rabies and also the need for public rabies awareness. The adult female was not vaccinated against rabies and was known to have been in a fight with a skunk in November. For more information on this incident, see the article on the next page.

Rabid skunks were down from 9 cases in 2007 to 8 cases in 2008. The cases occurred in Perth (4), Waterloo (3) and Wellington (1) counties in southwestern Ontario. Three of the skunks in Perth County were grouped in a small cluster near the Milverton area. The rabid dog from To-

ronto originated in this area. The discovery of this cluster of skunks is probably a result of the media attention surrounding the rabid puppy incident.

There were 2 rabid bats in the first quarter; this was unchanged from 2007. The bats were located in Perth and Hamilton-Wentworth counties. Both bats were big brown bats.

There were also 5 rabid bovines during this quarter—unchanged from 2007. All of the animals were from southwestern Ontario; one case occurred in Waterloo County and the remaining 4 cases were from a small cluster in Perth County.

Once again, there was an absence of raccoon strain rabies from Ontario. The last case occurred in September 2005. Ontario has now met OIE (aka World Organization for Animal Health) standards to be declared free of raccoon strain rabies. However, we must remain vigilant as the disease is still present in New York State near our borders in both the Niagara and St. Lawrence regions. It is also present in Quebec.

MNR will be conducting a trap-vaccinate-release program in the Niagara area again this year. As well, rabies vaccine baits will be distributed by air along the Welland Canal in the Niagara Region and on Wolfe, Howe, Simcoe, and Hill Islands in the St. Lawrence River. Nine cases of raccoon strain rabies have been confirmed on the US's Wellesley Island since December 2007. Wellesley Island and Hill Island practically touch so there is concern that this disease could spread to Ontario. MNR will be conducting enhanced surveillance in eastern Ontario to monitor for the presence of the disease.

Beverly Stevenson
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RABIES, CANINE - CANADA: (ONTARIO) CONTACT TRACING

Public Health Division, Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, Ontario Public Health - Human Contact Tracing related to canine rabies in Ontario

On 23 January 2008, the Public Health Division, MOHLTC, Ontario was alerted to a confirmed case of canine rabies with human contact occurring in the Toronto area. The details of the canine case and subsequent human contact tracing and public health investigation to date are summarized below:

A litter of 8 border collie cross puppies (primary litter) was born on 10 November 2007 on a farm in Perth County. The adult female contacted a skunk on 25 November 2007 and [the adult female dog] was found dead on 12 December 2007. She may have died up to 3 days earlier. On 3 January 2008, 4 surviving puppies were sold to a puppy vendor who took them to a kennel in Grey-Bruce County.

Between 5 January 2008 and 13 January 2008, the primary litter was sold at a flea market in west Toronto. One of the primary litter puppies became ill and following an assessment was surrendered to a Toronto animal shelter. That puppy died on 15 January 2008. Due to an exposure in the shelter, the animal was tested and confirmed on 21 January 2008 to have died with rabies.

Post-exposure preventative therapy (PET) was given to the exposed staff.

An animal health and public health investigation was initiated by authorities in Ontario. A number of other puppies were potentially mixed with the primary litter and also sold by the same puppy vendor. Due to the environment in the flea market, an unknown number of buyers and other persons may have come into contact with the primary litter of puppies; including the known infected puppy who died. In addition, other puppies managed and sold by the

same vendor may also have had contact with the rabies infected puppy, and these puppies may have had subsequent owners and other human contact.

Coordination of the public health investigation and contact tracing

Toronto Public Health took the lead on the local investigation at the flea market. In addition, local Public Health units in the Regions of Perth, Grey-Bruce, Peel, York, Durham, Halton, Simcoe, and others have also been involved in contact investigations. Coordination of the public health response has been provided by the Public Health Division, MOHLTC of Ontario. Canadian Food Inspection Agency and the Animal Health, Public Health Agency of Canada have been supporting the public health response.

Current status: Puppies from the primary litter (4 including the index canine rabies case) plus an additional 23 puppies (total 27) were potentially sold by a single puppy vendor in the window from 3 January - 20 January 2008. An additional 9 puppies were identified at the home of the puppy vendor (personal pets). The risk of the secondary animals being affected or transmitting rabies to a human has been assessed as low by the animal authorities, but are being managed by CFIA and Animal Health in collaboration with public health officials.

No human cases of rabies have been detected at this time due to this event.

An enhanced surveillance system has been activated to link animal exposure (primary litter plus others) through the puppy vendor. Human contact risk assessment is being done by multiple local health units. An on-going effort is being made to align the animal sales, owners' records and the human contact assessment databases.

To date (28 January 2008), 246

persons have been assessed by the local public health unit staff to have had a significant animal contact and PET has been recommended for these people. Rabies vaccine and rabies immune globulin supply management is being provided by Public Health Division.

Additional relevant information will be posted as it comes available.

Contact and public information:

Local Health Units (Ontario)

http://www.health.gov.on.ca/english/public/contact/phu/phuloc_mn.html

Public Health Division - Public Information—Rabies:

http://www.health.gov.on.ca/english/public/program/pubhealth/rabies/rabies_mn.html

CFIA website:

<http://www.inspection.gc.ca/english/util/notavie.shtml>

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[illegible]

Animal Rabies Report: January to March 2008

Animal Type	Fox			Raccoon			Skunk			Other Wildlife			Bat			Dog			Cat			Livestock			Totals		
County or Region	#	Cumulative		#	Cumulative		#	Cumulative		#	Cumulative		#	Cumulative		#	Cumulative		#	Cumulative		#	Cumulative		#	Cumulative	
		08	07		08	07		08	07		08	07		08	07		08	07		08	07		08	07			
Southern																											
Wentworth												1	1											1	1	0	
Haldimand-Norfolk																								0	0	0	
Brant																								0	0	0	
Niagara																								0	0	0	
Elgin																								0	0	0	
Oxford																								0	0	0	
Middlesex																								0	0	0	
Lambton														1										0	0	1	
Kent																								0	0	0	
Essex																								0	0	0	
Northern																											
Muskoka																								0	0	0	
Parry Sound																								0	0	0	
Nipissing																								0	0	0	
Sudbury																								0	0	0	
Cochrane																								0	0	0	
Timiskaming																								0	0	0	
Algoma																								0	0	0	
Thunder Bay																								0	0	0	
Rainy River																								0	0	0	
Kenora	1	1																						1	1	0	
Regional Totals																											
Eastern	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Central	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	2	
Western	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	8	9	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	5	5	4	15	15	14
Southern	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	
Northern	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	
Totals	1	1	0	0	0	0	8	8	9	0	0	0	2	2	2	2	2	1	0	0	0	5	5	5	18	18	17

Notes for this quarter:

All of the bats were big brown bats. The livestock cases were all bovines.

