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The rabies reporter

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Rabies in Ontario during the third quarter

Beverly Stevenson

With 24 reported rabies cases during the third quarter, the current total for this year is forty. This is down significantly from last year when there were 66 cases in Ontario by the end of September.

In fact, this is the fewest number of cases that Ontario has had at the end of the third quarter since rabies was established in Ontario over 50 years ago. The previous record low was in 2006 when there were 65 cases.

There were two rabid foxes during this quarter. Although the number of rabid foxes has tripled since 2008, three rabid foxes since January is not alarming. The first fox was located in Bruce County where arctic strain rabies persists. The other fox, located near the boundary of Victoria and Peterborough counties, was fortunately infected with bat strain rabies. This area has been free of arctic strain rabies for several years and had the fox had been infected with this strain, it would have represented a significant eastward movement of the disease. This would have required implementing control efforts in an area that has not been baited since 2003.

There were also four rabid skunks that were located in western Ontario – Grey (2), Perth (1), and Wellington (1) counties. In 2008 there were 21 rabid skunks, while only 7 cases have been reported in 2009. This may be a reflection of how well our new rabies vaccine, ONRAB, is working. ONRAB was first distributed in the field in 2006. During 2006 and 2007, ONRAB was only used in small test areas; whereas in 2008 and 2009, it was distributed across the majority of the baiting area in southwestern Ontario.

This quarter also saw 18 rabid bats, bringing the 2009 total to 23. This is down slightly from the 31 cases reported during the same period in 2008. The bats cases were scattered throughout Ontario. There were two infected silver-haired bats – one in Peel Region and the other on Manitoulin Island. There was also one little brown bat in Bruce County and one hoary bat in Waterloo Region. All of the other bats were big brown bats. It is unusual to see four different species of bats infected during one quarter. Little brown and big brown bats are most commonly reported with rabies. They're the most common species' in Ontario and are also the most closely associated with human activity.

Animal Rabies Report: July to September 2009

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Animal Type	Fox			Raccoon			Skunk			Other Wildlife			Bat			Dog			Cat			Livestock			Totals		
County or Region	Cumulative			Cumulative			Cumulative			Cumulative			Cumulative			Cumulative			Cumulative			Cumulative			Cumulative		
	#	09	08	#	09	08	#	09	08	#	09	08	#	09	08	#	09	08	#	09	08	#	09	08	#	09	08
Southern																											
Wentworth														5											0	0	5
Haldimand-Norfolk																									0	0	0
Brant																									0	0	0
Niagara													1	1											0	1	1
Elgin												1	2	2											1	2	2
Oxford																									0	0	0
Middlesex												1	1	6											1	1	6
Lambton												1	1	1											1	1	1
Kent														1											0	0	1
Essex														1											0	0	1
Northern																											
Muskoka																									0	0	0
Parry Sound																									0	0	0
Nipissing																									0	0	0
Sudbury												1	1												1	1	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																						0	0	1
Regional Totals																											
Eastern	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	3
Central	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	5	5	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	6	6
Western	1	2	0	0	0	0	4	7	21	0	0	0	8	10	6	0	0	2	0	0	2	0	7	8	13	26	39
Southern	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	5	17	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	5	17
Northern	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1
Totals	2	3	1	0	0	0	4	7	21	0	0	0	18	23	31	0	0	3	0	0	2	0	7	8	24	40	66

