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The rabies reporter

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Rabies in the first quarter: (almost) nothing to report

Beverly Stevenson

There isn't much that can be said about the rabies cases in Ontario during the first three months of 2010. This is largely because there was only one (no that's not a typo) confirmed case of rabies in the province during this quarter.

This is quite surprising given the mild winter and early spring. Late winter and early spring is usually when terrestrial cases are more prevalent due to the increased contact between wildlife during the reproductive season. The sole case was a rabid bat from Toronto. This is down from four cases (1 fox, 3 livestock) during the same time period in 2009.

The bat was submitted to the Canadian Cooperative Wildlife Health Centre (CCWHC). In the past few years, as the number of rabies cases have declined, the number of cases confirmed through 'non-traditional' routes has increased. Traditionally, an individual would come into contact with a rabies suspect animal and the animal would be submitted directly for testing through the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) office. This frequently also involved the local health unit. More recently (and perhaps due to increased public education), individuals are discovering animals which appear diseased and are taking them to other facilities for rehabilitation or disease diagnosis. The CCWHC, the Toronto Wildlife Centre, and humane societies have always submitted suspect animals to CFIA for rabies testing. However, as we get closer to eliminating terrestrial rabies from Ontario, these facilities become more and more important for helping us to pinpoint the locations where rabies is persisting in the province. The fewer cases there are, the more important it is for management purposes to know where the last remaining cases are.

In our efforts to continue to eliminate terrestrial rabies from Ontario, RRDU staff have been busy distributing baits by hand in portions of Grey and Bruce counties this spring. This is in response to two rabid skunks in the Tara and Durham areas in December 2009. In the fall of 2009, vaccine baits were aerially distributed throughout southwestern Ontario. In areas immediately surrounding the confirmed cases of rabid skunks, baits were distributed at 300 baits/km². In the remainder of the baiting area, baits were distributed at 20 baits/km². The high density baiting was directed at controlling the spread of rabies in the rabies 'hotspots'. Since the rabid skunks in the areas occurred after the fall aerial baiting program and they were not included in the high density areas, 8x8km square plots surrounding these cases were hand baited at 300 baits/km² in spring of 2010 to control the spread of the disease. These areas will be included in the regular aerial baiting program in September 2010.

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 and Long-Term Care. 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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Animal Rabies Report: January to March 2010

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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		
	#	10	09	#	10	09	#	10	09	#	10	09	#	10	09	#	10	09	#	10	09	#	10	09	#	10	09
Southern																											
Wentworth																									0	0	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																									0	0	0
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																									0	0	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	0
Central	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0
Western	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	4
Southern	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	0
Northern	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	0
Totals	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	1	1	4

