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The rabies reporter

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Batty about rabies: rabies in the third quarter

Beverly Stevenson

There were 18 confirmed rabies cases during the third quarter of 2011. All of them were in bats.

This is only the third time in over 50 years that there has been only one type of animal diagnosed with rabies during a quarter. The previous instances were in the first quarter of 2010 and the first quarter of 2011. In all three instances, it was only bats that were diagnosed.

The rabid bats from this quarter were from the counties of Stormont-Dundas-Glengarry (1), Frontenac (1), Victoria (2), Durham (1), Toronto (1), Peel (1), Wentworth (3), Niagara (1), Elgin (1), Oxford, (1), Middlesex (1), Lambton (1), and Sudbury (3). All of the bats were big brown bats except for two little brown bats from Sudbury District and a hoary bat from Wentworth.

Big brown bats account for over 90% of the rabid bats diagnosed by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (unpublished data). Although little brown bats are the most common bats in Ontario, little brown bats account for less than 5% of rabid bats. Hoary bats account for even fewer rabies diagnoses. In fact, there have only been five hoary bats reported with rabies in Ontario since 2001. This is probably due in part to their being a solitary species which tend to live near forested areas and avoid human habitation; very few people have seen a hoary bat despite their being the largest bat in Ontario (approximately 13-14 cm long).

Now that summer has left us and the weather is beginning to get cooler, bats will soon begin to migrate south or enter their hibernacula. This should result in a decrease in rabies cases during the next quarter. Meanwhile, MNR staff will continue to hope that there are no new cases of fox strain rabies.

Hoary bats are among the most widespread of all bats, found throughout most of Canada and the United States and south into Central and South America. The hoary bat is Hawaii's only native land mammal. Stray individuals have been found from Iceland to Orkney Island as well as in Bermuda and the Dominican Republic.

From www.batcon.org

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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		
	#	11	10	#	11	10	#	11	10	#	11	10	#	11	10	#	11	10	#	11	10	#	11	10	#	11	10
Southern																											
Wentworth													3	4	1										3	4	1
Haldimand-Norfolk															1										0	0	1
Brant																									0	0	0
Niagara													1	2	1										1	2	1
Elgin													1	1											1	1	0
Oxford													1	1											1	1	0
Middlesex													1	1	3										1	1	3
Lambton													1	1	4										1	1	4
Kent															1										0	0	1
Essex																									0	0	0
Northern																											
Muskoka																									0	0	0
Parry Sound																									0	0	0
Nipissing																									0	0	0
Sudbury													3	3											3	3	0
Cochrane																									0	0	0
Timiskaming																									0	0	0
Algoma																									0	0	0
Thunder Bay															2										0	0	2
Rainy River																									0	0	0
Kenora																									0	0	0
Regional Totals																											
Eastern	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	1
Central	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	5	9	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	5	9
Western	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	0	0	0	1	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	4	11
Southern	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	10	11	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	10	11
Northern	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	3	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	3	2
Totals	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	0	0	0	18	23	26	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	18	24	34

