

MAINE PUBLIC HEALTH INFORMATION



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TO: Animal Care, Epidemiologists, HETL, Maine Municipal Offices, City and County Health Departments, Maine Law Enforcement- Local PD, State Police Required

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SUBJECT: Maine Animal Rabies 4th Quarter Update – October 1-December 31, 2013

DATE: 1/22/2014

TIME:

PAGES: 3

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**Animal Rabies 4th Quarterly Update
October 1, 2013 – December 31, 2013**

Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention (Maine CDC) provides quarterly updates on animal rabies to veterinarians and other animal health professionals. This update is for the fourth quarter of 2013 (Oct. 1-Dec. 31).

Results are based on animals submitted and tested at the Health and Environmental Testing Laboratory (HETL) following exposure to a human or domestic animal. USDA APHIS Wildlife Services performs supplemental surveillance for rabid animals with no human or domestic animal exposure (Table 1). The number of rabid animals statewide may not be representative of the true incidence of animal rabies in Maine. See HETL's website for regularly updated counts at: <http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/mecdc/public-health-systems/health-and-environmental-testing/rabies/rabies2013.htm>. Figures 1 and 2 show additional animal rabies data for Maine.

Table 1. Animals positive for rabies virus by county, town and species in Maine – HETL and USDA, 2013

County	Town	Animal Species				Current Quarter Total (Oct. 1–Dec. 31)	Year-to-Date Total (Jan. 1–Dec. 31)
		Bat	Raccoon	Skunk	Other		
Androscoggin						0	1
Aroostook						0	0
Cumberland						1	9
	Scarborough			1			
Franklin						0	1
Hancock						1	3
	Franklin			1			
Kennebec						2	10
	Sidney			1			
	West Gardiner	1					
Knox						0	0
Lincoln						1	2
	Boothbay			1			
Oxford						1	3
	Fryeburg			1			
Penobscot						2	6
	Dixmont			1			
	Lincoln	1					
Piscataquis						0	1
Sagadahoc						0	1
Somerset						2	4
	New Portland			1			
	Palmyra		1				
Waldo						1	3
	Belfast		1				
Washington						0	1
York						1	6
	Limerick			1			
Species Total		2	2	8	0		
Maine Total						12	51

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Figure 1. Animal rabies by quarter and year in Maine, 2009-2013

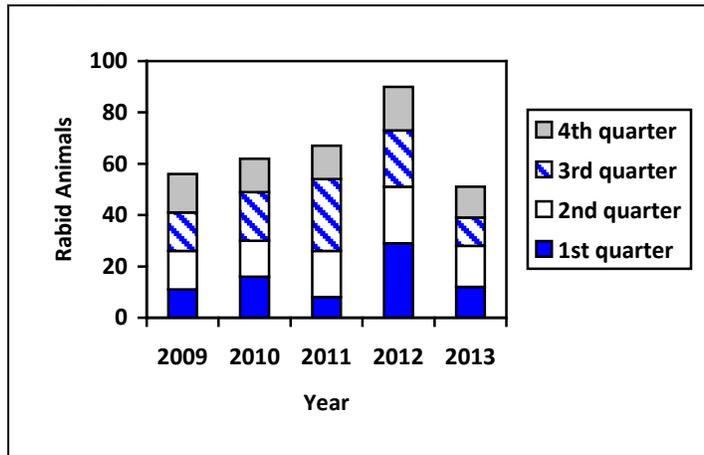
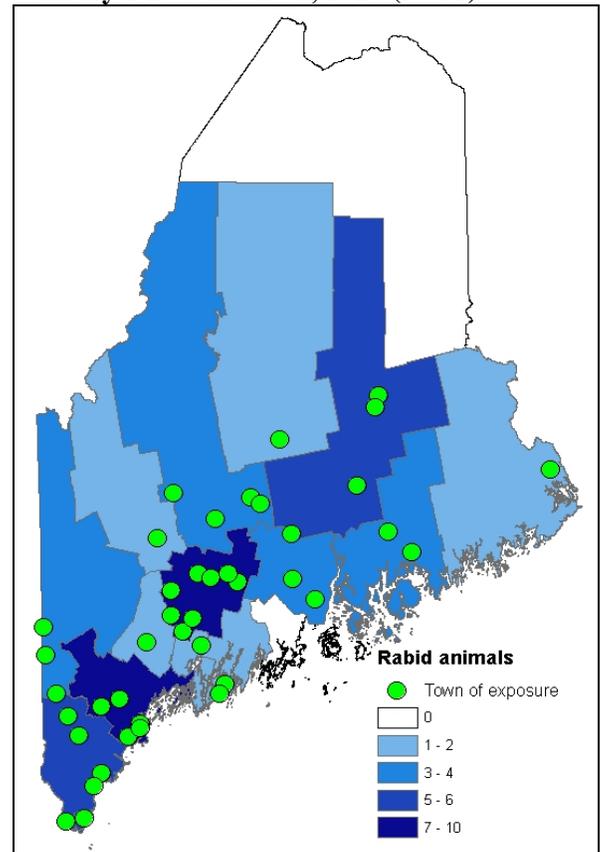


Figure 2. Animal rabies by county in Maine, January 1-December 31, 2013 (N=51)



Interesting points from this report:

- The count of animal rabies cases is the lowest it has been since 1994 when raccoon rabies entered the state. Cyclical trends could be used to explain the low count. Last year started with a very mild winter that kicked off a very active rabies year. It takes time for the susceptible population to reach threshold levels again (Thursfield 2007).
- The number of rabid raccoons in the fourth quarter is lower than expected given past quarters.
- Washington County had its first rabid animal (a skunk) reported in six years. USDA APHIS Wildlife Services requested variant testing by U.S. CDC and the result was Mid-Atlantic Raccoon variant. USDA also notified their counterpart in New Brunswick of the result given the proximity to the border.
- Both rabid bats from the fourth quarter were big brown bats.
- At the end of the 2012-2013 hibernating season, bats with White Nose Syndrome (WNS) were confirmed in 22 states (including Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, and Massachusetts) and five Canadian provinces.

Rabies Management:

- Rabies is spread when the virus is introduced into bite wounds, open cuts in skin, or onto mucous membranes from an infected animal's saliva or neural (brain or spinal cord) tissue.
- Refer to the updated [Maine Rabies Management Guidelines 2012, 3rd Edition](#) to assess exposures.
- Report possible human or domestic animal exposures to Maine CDC at 1-800-821-5821.
- Prompt recognition and reporting of exposures to medical professionals, public health, game wardens, and local animal control officers is critical to ensure appropriate medical and veterinary management.
- For more information, see the Maine CDC rabies website at www.mainepublichealth.gov/rabies.

References:

Thursfield, Michael. *Veterinary Epidemiology*. Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons, 2013. Print.
 White-Nose Syndrome.org. A Coordinated Response to the Devastating Bat Disease. Accessed on January 22, 2014. <http://www.whitenosesyndrome.org/>.