Rabies in the United States: The Last 10 Years

Rabies in the United States remains a threat primarily due to its presence in wildlife. The possibility of wild animals transmitting this fatal disease to domestic animals and humans has spurred significant public health awareness efforts about the threat. In addition, those who have had contact with a potentially rabid animal need postexposure prophylaxis (PEP) to prevent the onset of rabies.

As the 10th annual World Rabies Day draws near (September 28, 2016), we review rabies-related milestones, trends, and publications from the last 10 years in the United States.


<table>
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<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<td>2006</td>
<td>CDC documents 6417 reported cases of rabies in nonhuman animals throughout the US and PR in 2005</td>
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<td>2007</td>
<td>CDC announces that rabies vaccination programs have eliminated domestic dogs as reservoirs of rabies. &gt;90% of all animal cases reported annually to CDC occur in wildlife</td>
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<td>2010</td>
<td>Fifth dose of rabies vaccine in PEP no longer recommended for most people. Rabies PEP should still be administered using a 5-dose vaccine regimen in immunosuppressed patients</td>
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<td>2016</td>
<td>CDC documents 6033 reported cases of rabies in nonhuman animals throughout the US and PR in 2014</td>
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CDC, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; PEP, postexposure prophylaxis; PR, Puerto Rico; US, United States.
### Trends in Rabies in the United States

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<th>In Animals</th>
<th>In Humans</th>
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<td><strong>Raccoons</strong> have been the species most frequently reported to have rabies annually</td>
<td><strong>Confirmed rabies cases have been reported in 34 people</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Skunks</strong> and <strong>bats</strong> have alternated between the second and third most frequently reported rabid animals</td>
<td><strong>Bats</strong> have been implicated as the source of infection in humans more than any other animal</td>
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<td><strong>Foxes</strong> are the fourth most frequently reported rabid animal</td>
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**Cases of Rabid Animals, US, 2014 (Most Frequently Reported Wildlife Species Only)**

- **1588** Raccoons
- **1822** Bats
- **1756** Skunks
- **311** Foxes

**Human Rabies Cases and Where Acquired, 2004-2015**

- **23** in US/PR
- **11** outside US/PR

62% of human rabies cases reported from 2004 to 2015 have been due to bats

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*Based on the most recently published data (2016) and including cases from 2004-2014 for animals and 2004-2015 for humans.

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**REFERENCES**


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