

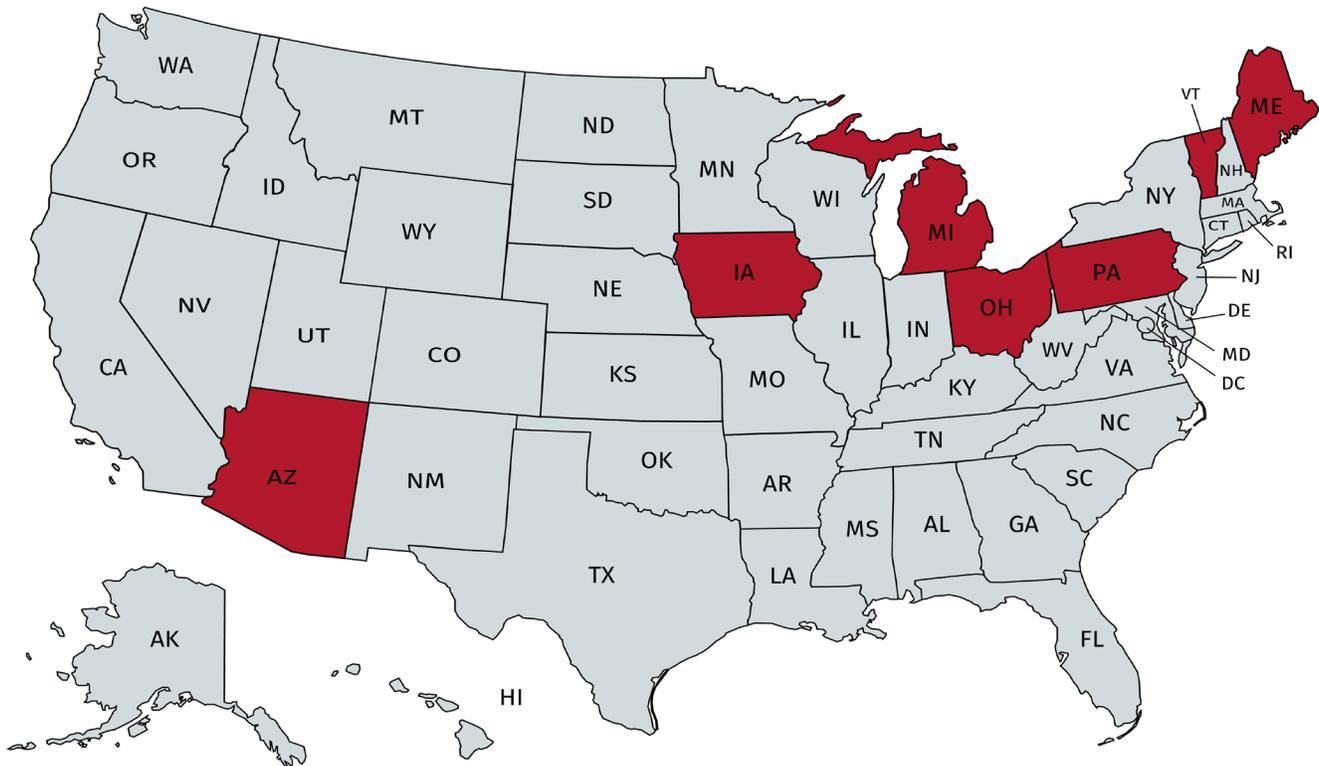
RABIES WATCH

YOUR SOURCE FOR RABIES AWARENESS AND EDUCATION

SPRING 2017, Issue #5

Coast to Coast: Rabies on the Rise in the US

Wild and domestic animals pose an increasing threat not just in rural areas, but in suburbs and cities, too. Read the latest information that impacts your state and region. The following states in red showed an increase in rabies reporting from 2015 to 2016:



Arizona

In April 2017, the Arizona Game and Fish Department reported an “outbreak” of rabies for 2016 and the first quarter of 2017.¹ In 2015, 120 animals were confirmed to have rabies compared with 152 confirmed rabid animals in 2016.^{2,3} Bats and skunks were the most frequently infected animals identified in Arizona in these 2 years.^{2,3} For the first quarter of 2017, skunk exposures were predominant, but fox exposures were more common than bat exposures.⁴ This story noted that 15 people in Arizona have contact with rabid animals each year, on average.¹



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Iowa

The final 2016 count of 19 confirmed rabies cases among animals in Iowa represented an increase over the 3 prior years, during which between 12 and 15 such cases were reported.⁵ Bats (12 cases) and dogs (3 cases) were the most commonly affected species, with individual cases affecting a skunk, cat, cow, and horse.⁵ The big brown bat accounted for all the bat exposures that were confirmed as positive for rabies infection.⁵ An estimated 390 people in Iowa are believed to receive postexposure prophylaxis (PEP) each year in response to potential rabies virus exposures.⁵

Maine

The Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention reported that a total of 75 animal cases of rabies were confirmed in 2016.⁶ This was the highest number of cases reported since 2012.⁷ In 2016, raccoons (40 cases) and skunks (20 cases) were the species in which rabies was most frequently confirmed, although cases were all also confirmed in big brown bats (6), other bats (2), cats (2), grey foxes (2), cow (1), red fox (1), and woodchuck (1).⁶ State officials attributed this increase from prior years to the mild winter.⁷

Michigan

A total of 41 rabies-positive animals were identified in Michigan in 2016. The 41 cases (37 bats, 4 skunks) represented an increase from the 35 cases (33 bats, 1 skunk, 1 fox) reported in 2015.⁸

Ohio

In 2016, 41 rabies cases were confirmed among animals in Ohio, including bats (36 cases) and raccoons (5 cases).⁹ In contrast, 26 such cases (20 bats, 6 raccoons) were reported in 2015.¹⁰

Pennsylvania

The number of rabies cases reported in Pennsylvania increased from 337 in 2015 to 404 in 2016.¹¹ While raccoons (177 cases) were the predominant species, the array of other species included bats (67), skunks (50), cats (49), foxes (32), groundhogs (10), cows (8), horses (3), dogs (2), deer (2), goats (2), coyote (1), and sheep (1).¹¹

Vermont

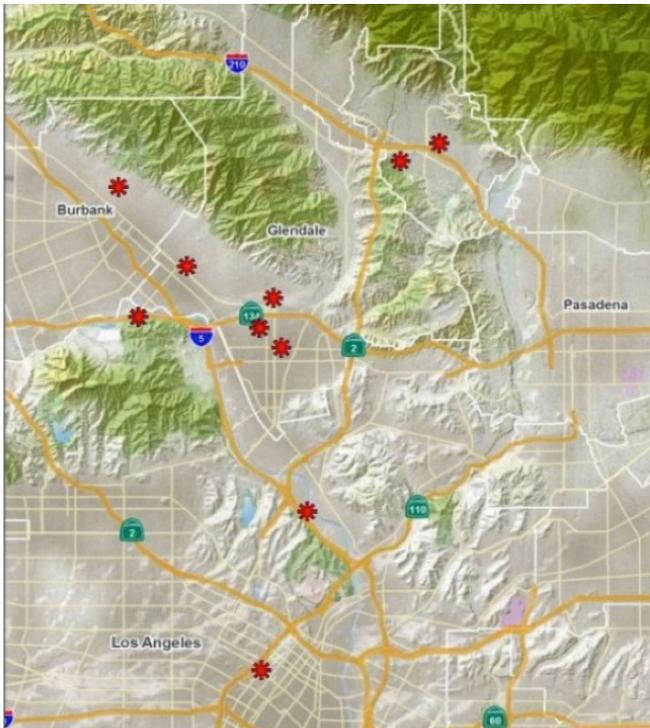
From 2015 to 2016, the number of animals testing positive for rabies in Vermont increased from 25 to 48.^{12,13} These cases were generally distributed among raccoons, big brown bats, skunks, and cats in both years, although other species including gray and red foxes, a cow, and a sheep were identified in 2016.¹³

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Areas With Changes in Distribution of Reported Rabies Cases

In addition to the statewide increases in annual rabies cases summarized above, other areas of the country have experienced local increases in rabies cases. News reports from these areas serve as reminders that rabies and its dire consequences command vigilance within the healthcare community, with a readiness to intervene appropriately when patients present with potential rabies virus exposures.

Reported Cases of Bat Rabies Near Downtown Los Angeles, 1/1/16-8/29/16



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Los Angeles County, California

From 2015 to 2016, the number of confirmed cases of rabid animals in the state of California decreased from 230 (full year) to 175 (January 1 – December 1).^{14,15} However, in Los Angeles county, the incidence of rabid bats has increased markedly to more than 30 cases per year since 2010.¹⁶ Areas of Los Angeles County that have reported rabid bats in 2016 include Santa Clarita, and Glendale and Burbank closer to downtown.¹⁷

Beaufort County, South Carolina

The total number of confirmed rabies cases in animals across South Carolina decreased from 130 in 2015 to 94 in 2016.^{18,19} However, Beaufort County reported an increase from 3 cases to 13 cases, all in raccoons, over these 2 years.^{18,19} While rabies incidence rates can be cyclical, the Beaufort County Animal Services department received 1 to 2 telephone calls per day about potentially rabid animals in 2016 and reported that rabid animals were found not only in rural areas, but also in downtown Beaufort.²⁰



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