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## **Rabies Reminder Eastern Ontario**

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**June 16, 2015**

Since March 2015 there has been a significant cluster of rabid raccoons identified along the Northern edge of Franklin County (New York), very close to the border with Ontario and Quebec and across the river from Cornwall ON. The most recent case was found in Quebec, only a few hundred meters from the Ontario border. Distribution of wildlife rabies vaccine baits has been completed on the US side, and is currently being done in the bordering areas of Ontario and Quebec (south of the St. Lawrence) as well.

This is a reminder to veterinarians, particularly in Eastern Ontario, to remain vigilant for cases of domestic animal exposure to potentially rabid animals. The last case of raccoon rabies in Ontario was detected in 2005, and the last case of fox rabies was detected in 2012. However, there continues to be risk of incursion of fox rabies from Northern regions of the province and of raccoon rabies from New York state. Contact with rabid bats also remains a risk in all regions.

The best protection against rabies for domestic animals and people is first to avoid contact with potentially rabid wildlife, and to keep domestic animals up-to-date on rabies vaccination. If you suspect a domestic animal may have recently been exposed to a potentially rabid animal, it should be vaccinated (or revaccinated) as soon as possible.

### **Reminder of who to call in cases of potential rabies exposure:**

- 1. Human exposure to a potentially rabid animal → Local Public Health (PH) Unit**
- 2. Domestic animal exposure to a potentially rabid animal, NO human exposure → Local veterinarian / OMAFRA**
  - Animal owners should be directed to contact their local veterinarian as the first step for any animal health concerns.
  - Veterinarians can call the OMAFRA Agricultural Information Contact Centre: 1-877-424-1300 for assistance.
- 3. Abnormal wildlife, NO domestic animal exposure, NO human exposure → MNRF or CWHC**
  - For terrestrial wildlife, call the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNRF) Rabies Hotline: 1-888-574-6656.
  - If a sick or injured bat is found, consider contacting the Canadian Wildlife Health Cooperative (CWHC) at 1-866-673-4781.

### **Additional information for the public:**

Eastern Ontario Health Unit press release:

[http://www.eohu.ca/media/view\\_release\\_e.php?pressID=228](http://www.eohu.ca/media/view_release_e.php?pressID=228)

Bureau de santé de l'est de l'Ontario communiqués de presse:

[http://www.eohu.ca/media/view\\_release\\_f.php?pressID=228](http://www.eohu.ca/media/view_release_f.php?pressID=228)

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