



World Rabies Day is September 28, 2009

Arizona Rabies Update – 2009

2009 is shaping-up to be the worst rabies year in Arizona history. Over 200 rabid animals have been reported this year which sets a new state record. 37 humans and 116 domestic animals have been exposed to rabid animals this year. Most human rabies exposures have involved people playing with bats. Many of these bat exposures involved kids. Most pet exposures have involved dogs fighting with skunks. In many cases, the dogs were not on a leash.

Fast Facts on Rabies in Arizona

- Rabies is caused by a virus that attacks the central nervous system (brain and spinal cord).
- Rabies is almost always fatal once symptoms begin.
- People with exposures to rabid animals must be treated with vaccine and anti-serum soon after the exposure to prevent rabies virus from invading the nervous system.
- Any mammal can get rabies if exposed to rabid animals.
- In Arizona, rabies is most commonly seen in Bats, Skunks and Foxes as these animals are the primary reservoirs (animal sources for rabies).
- During rabies outbreaks, rabies can “spillover” into other animals, such as bobcats, coyotes, dogs, cats, horses, cows, javelina, etc.
- In Arizona, rabies has never been documented in rodents or rabbits.
- Rabies is transmitted through animal bites or through saliva contact to broken skin or mucous membranes (eyes, nose, mouth).

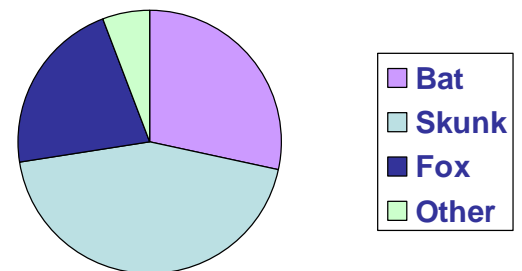
Protect Yourself, Family & Pets

- Vaccinate your pets against rabies.
- Keep pets on a leash or inside a fenced yard.
- Enjoy wildlife from a distance. Do not attempt to feed, approach or touch wild animals. Teach your kids to leave wild animals alone!
- Report suspect rabid animals to your local animal control program.
- If you, a family member, or pet are exposed to a suspect rabid animal, be sure to report the incident to local animal control program and if possible, have them capture/contain the animal so it can be submitted to the Arizona State Lab for rabies testing
- Wash bite wounds immediately with soap & water.

Possible Signs & Symptoms of Rabid Animals

- Animals showing no fear or erratic & unpredictable behavior
- Animals with aggressive behavior such as biting at objects, the air, and other animals
- Animals refusing to eat or drink, excessive drooling, or unusual vocalization. Excessive drooling or “foaming at the mouth” is not a reliable sign of rabies.
- Animals being off balance & clumsy
- Grounded bats
- Nocturnal animals being out during the day

Confirmed Rabid Animals, Arizona 2009



For more information, visit our website at www.azdhs.gov/phs/oids/vector. Or, you can contact your local health department, animal control program or the Arizona Department of Health Services at (602) 364-4562.

Leadership for a Healthy Arizona

