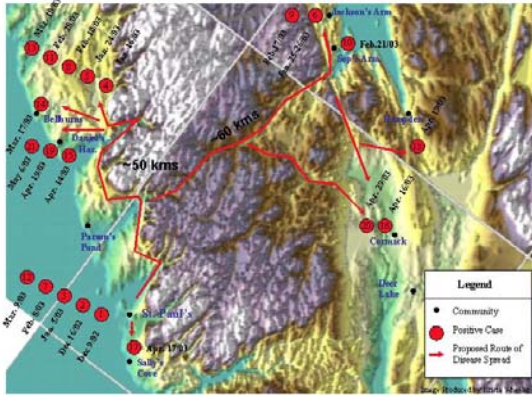


Rabies Eradication 2002-2004

From December 2002 until April 2004, the provincial government was involved in a program to eradicate rabies from the Island of Newfoundland. First discovered on the Northern Peninsula, an intensive effort costing \$2 million, and involving public education and vaccination of pets, vaccination of wild foxes, trapping and testing over 4,000 foxes, coyote and lynx in affected areas, resulted in the Island once more being declared free of fox rabies.



Theory on how rabies spread based on terrain and timeline of positive cases

Prevention of Rabies

1. Vaccinate your pets against rabies.
2. Ensure your pet is always under your control.
3. Report strange behaviour in wild animals or pets to local authorities.
4. Educate yourself on the risks in your own area.
5. Report any human contact with potentially infected animals to local public health authorities.

For more information please contact the Animal Health Division.

Written in cooperation with the Wildlife Division (Environment & Conservation), the Department of Health & Community Services, the Newfoundland and Labrador Veterinary Medical Association and the World Rabies Day Organization.

Image credits:

1. World Rabies Day logos: worldrabiesday.org
2. Rabies map: World Health Organization www.who.int

Other information pamphlets are available online from the Department of Natural Resources at:

www.nr.gov.nl.ca/agric/

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World Rabies Day



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Rabies is an infectious disease that is most often spread by the bite of an animal. Globally, it causes at least 55,000 human deaths per year. In September every year, we recognize the importance of rabies as a serious disease and ask that you read this information to see how **you** can help to prevent it.

Rabies as a Disease

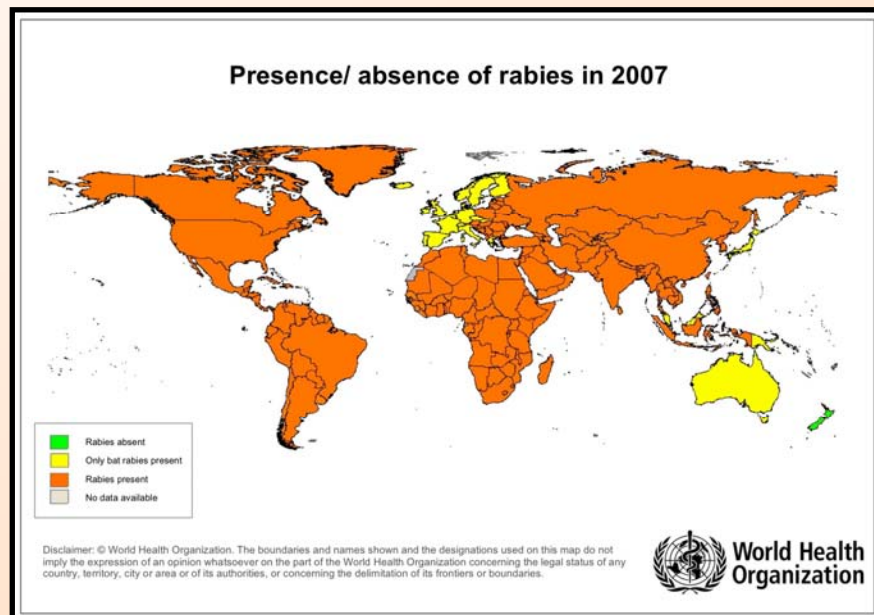
Rabies is caused by a virus that most commonly spreads through the bite of an infected animal (mammal), such as a dog, cat, fox or bat.

If a person has been bitten by a rabid animal and does not seek medical treatment, they can die. Medical treatment has to be given shortly after the bite or else it will not be effective.

Types of Rabies

Rabies exists in most parts of the world, though there are islands such as Australia, New Zealand and Newfoundland that have managed to remain rabies free.

Rabies is spread by many mammals, including (but not limited to) foxes, dogs and other domestic animals, raccoons, skunks, coyotes, and bats. Researchers have been able to correlate specific rabies virus strains to specific species of mammals. While this enables organizations combating rabies to trace the movement of the disease, rabies does spread outside of the normal host species and is most often fatal to humans.



Rabies in Canada

Rabies exists in most Canadian provinces and territories. In some cases, only the bat strains are found (BC, NS, PEI), while others see it also in skunks (AB, SK, MB), red and arctic foxes (Territories, Labrador, ON, QC) and raccoons (ON, QC, NB).

There is concern that the raccoon strain of rabies virus, common to the eastern seaboard of the US, will establish itself permanently in southern Canada. In recent years, Ontario, Quebec and New Brunswick have all faced outbreaks in raccoons resulting from northern movement of the disease from the US.

In Canada, cases of rabies in humans are rare but have been reported. In recent years, the cases are associated with contact with infected bats, with species such as the silver-haired bat (*Lasionycteris noctivagans*) commonly implicated.

Rabies in Newfoundland and Labrador

In this Province, we have seen evidence of fox rabies and bat rabies. Fox rabies exists on a permanent basis in Labrador and arrived on the Island of Newfoundland twice in recent memory, once in 1988 and again in 2002.



Bat rabies has been reported twice in this Province, once in Grand Bruit in 1989 and once in Cartwright in 2004. In the Grand Bruit incident, the animal involved was a red fox found dead on a snowbank. In Cartwright, the virus was found in one of a group of little brown bats (*Myotis lucifugus*) removed from someone's house.

Research in our Province

As with most diseases, there are areas where scientific research will help us to better understand rabies in our Province.

Examples of current research includes:

1. The types and patterns of rabies movement in Labrador.
2. Bat species and their importance for rabies on the Island of Newfoundland.