

Wildlife Research and Monitoring Section
Trent University, DNA Building
1600 West Bank Drive
Peterborough, Ontario K9J 0G2

Phone (705) 755-2272
FAX (705) 755-1559
E-mail rabies@ontario.ca

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To protect the people of Ontario against rabies, the province is planning to begin its annual wildlife rabies control operations on April 1, 2016. The intention is to reach wild raccoons, skunks and foxes and prevent the further spread of raccoon strain and fox strain rabies in Ontario.

This ministry is committed to the research, control and elimination of terrestrial wildliferabies in Ontario, thereby protecting the health and safety of the public, their pets and the wildlife of this province. Ontario's programs are so successful that southern Ontario was free of raccoon strain rabies for more than a decade and fox strain rabies for over two years.

If a person contracts rabies and does not receive treatment, the disease is fatal.

The province uses a number of control measures in the fight against the deadly rabies virus. The management activities for the 2016 spring season include:

- Aerial baiting in a small area of Perth County – projected to start April 1
- Aerial baiting in the Golden Horseshoe area – projected to start April 1 and be completed by the end of April
- Hand baiting of urban areas – projected to start April 4 and continue throughout the spring and early summer
- control measures at the point of infection – only to take place in the event of a raccoon or 'Ontario fox strain' rabies incident

Following the spring operations mentioned above, summer management activities include:

- aerial baiting in a small area in eastern Ontario along the St. Lawrence River and ground baiting (within urban areas if required)– scheduled for mid-August
- aerial baiting within a 50 km radius of confirmed raccoon strain rabies cases - scheduled for mid-August
- ground and aerial urban and rural baiting in Niagara area – scheduled for late August
- aerial baiting within a 50 km radius of confirmed fox strain rabies cases - scheduled for mid-September
- control measures at the point of infection – only to take place in the event of a raccoon or 'Ontario fox strain' rabies incident

Cases of fox strain rabies have dropped dramatically across Ontario with one case reported in Perth County in December 2015. Prior to this, the last cases in southern Ontario were in 2012. This is down from 1,500 cases/year before control measures were implemented in 1989, roughly a 99% drop.

Prior to the recent raccoon cases in the Hamilton area, the last confirmed case of raccoon strain rabies case in the province occurred in September 2005.

The khaki-green coloured bait being dropped from the aircraft is made of wax-fat with an attractant flavour (vanilla-sugar). A label with a toll-free telephone number (1-888-574-6656) and "Do not eat" warning are on the

exterior of the bait and a plastic package containing the liquid rabies vaccine is embedded in the centre. If found, the bait should not be touched, but left for raccoons, skunks and foxes to consume. (See attached bait identification handout for detailed description.)

The rabies control program is a joint effort that receives important input from a variety of partners across Ontario. Regional health units, municipalities, wildlife rehabilitators, licensed trappers, wildlife control agents and aboriginal communities are all key to the continued success of Ontario's world-renowned rabies control program.

Please see the attached information package for:

- 1) Map of the proposed baiting area
- 2) Rabies Vaccine Bait Information Sheet

For further information, visit the Rabies in Ontario website at <http://www.ontario.ca/environment-and-energy/rabies> or contact our rabies hotline at 1-888-574-6656.

Regards,

Beverly Stevenson
Wildlife Research Technician,
Wildlife Research and Monitoring Section