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1. Home
2. Print
3. Pdf
4. Node
5. Entity Print

National Rabies Management Program Overview

Last Modified:



Rabies is caused by a virus that infects the central nervous system in mammals. It is almost always transmitted through the bite of a rabid animal. The majority of rabies cases in the United States occur in wildlife including raccoons, skunks, foxes and bats. Rabies is invariably fatal, however, effective vaccines are available to protect people, pets and livestock.

The National Rabies Management Program was established in recognition of the changing scope of rabies. The goal of the program is to prevent the further spread of wildlife rabies and eventually eliminate terrestrial rabies in the United States through an integrated program that involves the use of oral rabies vaccination targeting wild animals.

Since 1995, Wildlife Services (WS) has been working cooperatively with local, State, and Federal governments, universities and other partners to address this public health problem by distributing oral rabies vaccination (ORV) baits in targeted areas. This cooperative program targets the raccoon variant, canine variant in coyotes and a unique variant of gray fox rabies.

World Rabies Day 2020

World Rabies Day 2018

Wildlife Rabies and ORV Videos

ORV Daily Status Dashboard

Updated daily during operations.

ORV Historical Dashboard

Historical Operations

U.S. National Plan for Wildlife Rabies Management (2023-2027)

Rabies Program Information

Rabies is one of the oldest known viral diseases, yet today it remains a significant wildlife-management and public-health challenge. Rabies affects the central nervous system of unvaccinated animals that are exposed to the virus and is invariably fatal. Over the past 30 years, rabies management has grown in complexity in the United States, as wild animals, including skunks, raccoons, foxes, coyotes, and bats, have replaced the domestic dog as the primary reservoir for the disease.

- National ORV Information by State
- Oral Rabies Vaccination
- Rabies Frequently Asked Questions
- Oral Rabies Vaccination Photo Gallery
- Rabies Library
- Rabies Factsheets, Brochures, and Other Outreach Products

Do you have questions about the Rabies Management Program or need more information about rabies management activities?

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