

NAUGATUCK VALLEY HEALTH DISTRICT

POTENTIAL RABIES EXPOSURE SURVEILLANCE DATA REPORT

FISCAL YEAR JULY 1, 2011 – JUNE 30, 2012



Background:

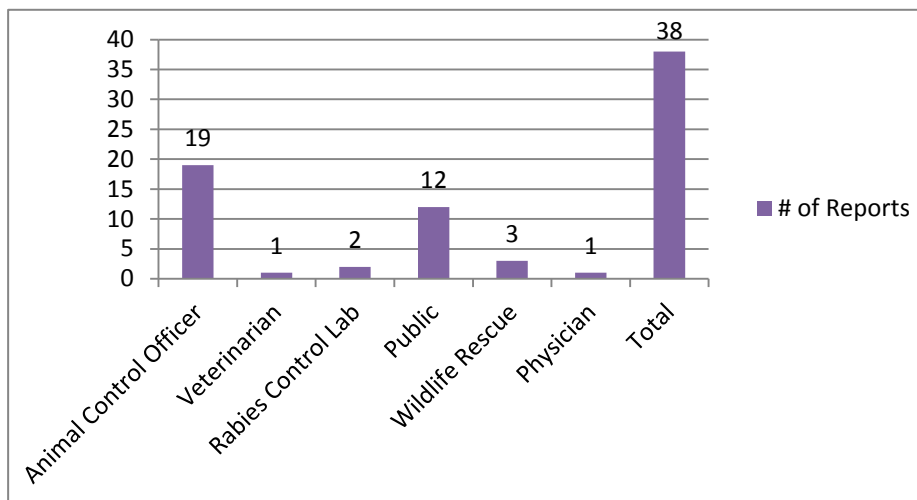
The rabies virus is found in many wild and domestic mammals including, but not limited to: raccoons, skunks, bats, and unvaccinated dogs and cats. Rabies is usually spread to humans through a bite from an infected animal; however, saliva contact with mucous membranes or open wounds on the skin are also possible routes of transmission. Early symptoms of rabies include irritability, headache, fever and sometimes itching or pain at the site of exposure. The disease eventually progresses to paralysis, spasms of the throat muscles, convulsions, delirium and death. Exposure of man to a rabid animal does not always result in rabies. If preventive treatment is obtained promptly following a rabies exposure, most cases of rabies will be prevented. Untreated cases will invariably result in death.

Naugatuck Valley Health District (NVHD) Public Health Nurses are available to assist community members potentially exposed to the rabies virus by providing basic medical management information and exposure education. All potential cases involving individuals and/or domestic animals that are remotely suspected of exposure to a bite, mucous membrane, or open wound contamination by saliva of a rabies infected animal should be reported to the Naugatuck Valley Health Department immediately. This report outlines NVHD potential rabies exposure surveillance data, as reported to NHVD, and organized by reporting site, town, and exposure animal.

Surveillance Data:

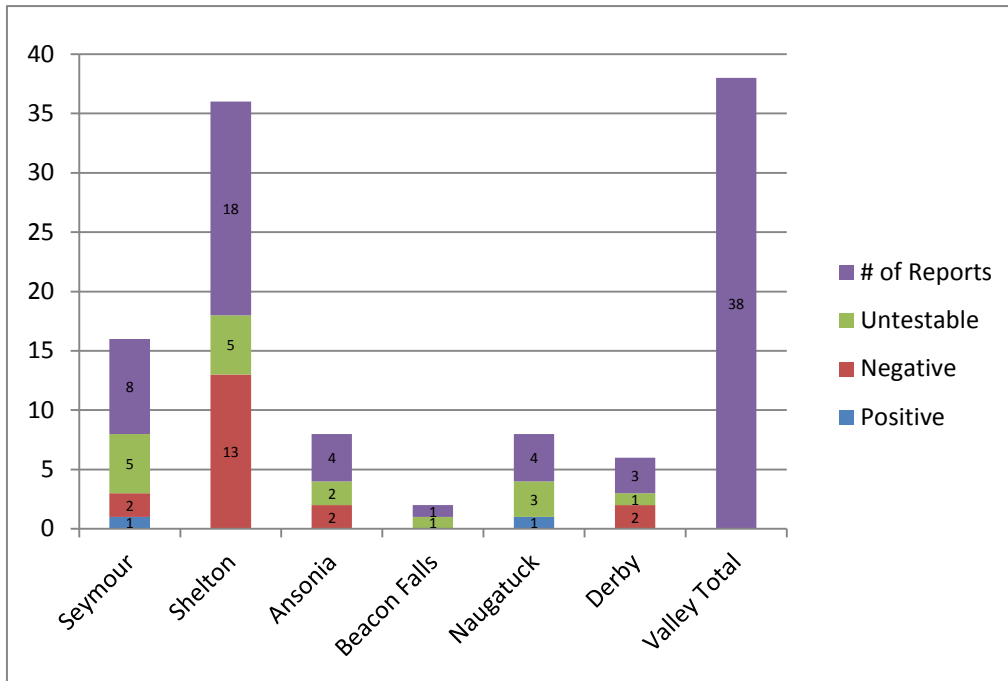
Dependent upon the specifics of each case, the Naugatuck Valley Health District is notified of potential rabies exposures via various reporting sites including, but not limited to: animal control officers, veterinarians, the DPH rabies control lab, wildlife rescue organizations, physicians, and the general public.

Figure 1.1. Potential Rabies Exposure Reports as submitted to NVHD and organized by reporting site (Fiscal Year 2011 - 2012)



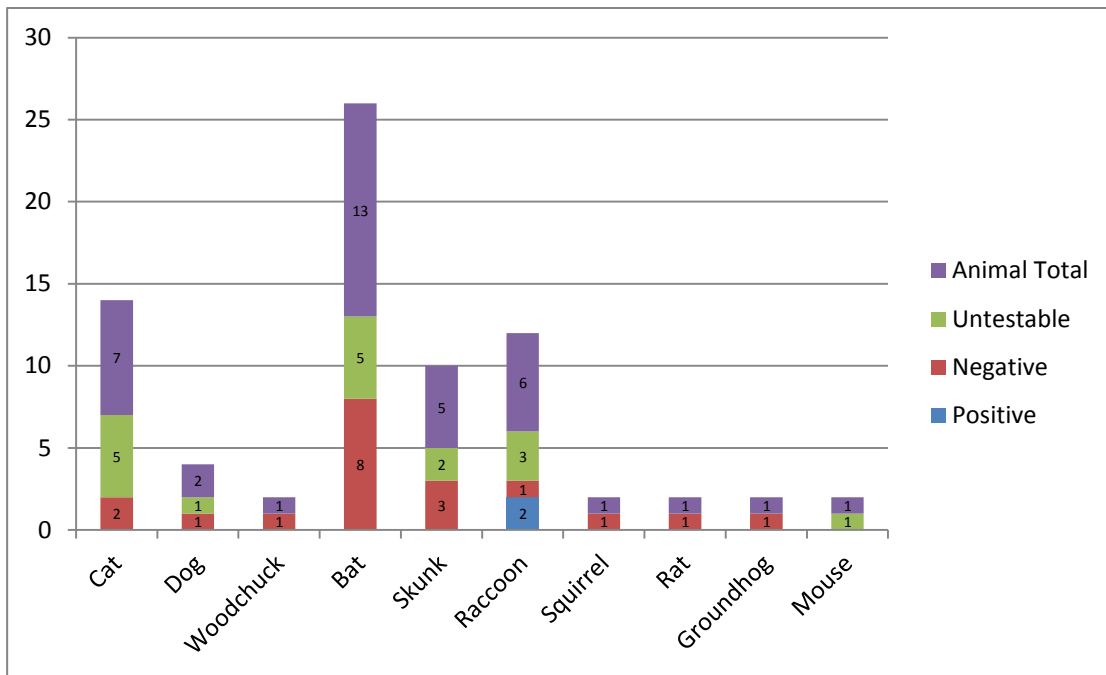
In total, there were 38 potential rabies exposure reports filed through NVHD during the fiscal year 2011 – 2012. Figure 1.1 shows that when itemizing surveillance data by reporting site the majority of potential exposure notifications were submitted to NVHD by Valley Animal Control Officers (50%) and the general public (31.6%).

Figure 1.2. Potential Rabies Exposure Reports as submitted to NVHD and organized by town and rabies testing results (Fiscal Year 2011 - 2012)



Of the 38 potential rabies exposure reports filed through NVHD during fiscal year 2011 – 2012, the greatest numbers of potential exposures were reported as occurring in the city of Shelton (47.4%). Of the 18 potential exposure cases reported from Shelton, 13 potential exposure animals tested negative for the rabies virus and 5 were deemed untestable. More notably, however, is that upon report to NVHD and testing by the State of Connecticut Department of Public Health Laboratory, one exposure animal from Seymour and one exposure animal from Naugatuck tested positive for the rabies virus.

Figure 1.3. Potential Rabies Exposure Reports as submitted to NVHD and organized by exposure animal and rabies testing results (Fiscal Year 2011 - 2012)



As depicted in figure 1.3, both of the potential exposure animals which tested positive for rabies during fiscal year 2011 – 2012 were raccoons—even though the majority of potential rabies exposure reports filed through NVHD were related to human or domestic animal exposure to bats (34.2%).

Conclusions:

The Naugatuck Valley Health District warns community members that rabies continues to be present in area wildlife and urges residents to take precautions to avoid rabies exposure to humans and domestic animals. As represented in this report, the need for concern was highlighted with recent confirmation of two separate rabid raccoons coming into contact with community members in both Seymour and Naugatuck. Rabies is a very real problem in the Valley district area and residents need to be vigilant. Though there is no need for panic, the NVHD urges all community members to take necessary precautions to avoid exposure to the rabies disease.

Protect Yourself and Your Pets:

1. Have your veterinarian vaccinate your dogs and cats on a regular basis. This protects your pet, you, and your family.
2. *DO NOT* let your pets roam freely; they will be more likely to be exposed to rabies and bring it into your home. Feed them indoors and keep them confined at night.
3. *DO NOT* make your yard or house inviting to wild animals. To avoid attracting wildlife in or near the home, screen crawl spaces and attic vents, cap chimneys, secure garbage lids and keep garage doors closed to eliminate potential food sources.
4. If your pet is exposed to a suspected rabid animal, wear gloves when handling it or treating it's wounded areas. Contact your local veterinarian for advice immediately.
5. Avoid contact with wild or stray animals, particularly if the animal is acting strangely. *DO NOT TOUCH OR PICK UP WILD ANIMALS—EVEN BABY ANIMALS NO MATTER HOW FRIENDLY THEY MAY SEEM.* Unprovoked attacks are frequently clear evidence of rabies; seek treatment immediately.
6. If you notice an animal acting strangely, report it to your local Animal Control Officer or Police Department immediately.
7. If an animal bites you (especially a raccoon, skunk, dog, cat, or bat) follow these steps:
 - If safely possible, identify the exposure animal and its probable location. Contact your local Animal Control Officer or Police Department to relay this information immediately.
 - Wash the affected area with soap and water and call your health care provider.

Date of Report: 12/2/13