

LAKE METROPARKS

Kevin P. Clinton Wildlife Center

Rabies

Rabies is an acute viral disease that attacks the nervous systems of warm-blooded animals. It is usually fatal in both humans and animals if untreated. Rabies is transmitted when saliva from an infected animal comes in contact with an open wound or mucous membrane. This is usually through a bite. The virus can take weeks or months to travel to the brain, where it causes progressively severe symptoms that may result in anxiety, restlessness, confusion, agitation, incoordination, difficulty swallowing, seizures and death.

History of Rabies in Lake County

Beginning in the late 1970s, a strain of rabies associated with raccoons spread rapidly along the east coast of the United States. Although multiple health agencies tried to control its advance, the raccoon rabies variant (RRV) entered northeast Ohio in 1996 and eventually reached Lake County in 2004. The efforts of the Lake County General Health District, Ohio Department of Health, Ohio Division of Wildlife and the USDA Wildlife Services have been extremely successful in combating the spread of the disease, and yet Lake County has continued to be the state's hot spot. In 2011, there were 10 confirmed rabies cases in Lake County; more than any other county in the state. Lake County is considered to be a "positive" county and therefore Lake Metroparks must be responsible in its fight against the spread of a serious health problem.

The Kevin P. Clinton Wildlife Center's Responsibility

The state of Ohio prohibits the transfer of rabies vector species (RVS) across county lines. **State law prohibits the Kevin P. Clinton Wildlife Center from accepting skunks and raccoons for care.** Therefore, both of these species must be humanely euthanized if brought to the center.



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National Rabies Management Program

The United States Department of Agriculture's Wildlife Services, in cooperation with other federal, state and local agencies, has two programs in place to combat the spread of rabies: The ORV and the TVR.

The **Oral Rabies Vaccine (ORV)** baiting program distributes oral rabies vaccination baits via aircraft. The vaccine in these baits cannot cause rabies and has been shown to be safe in more than 60 different species of animals, including cats and dogs. Raccoons find the bait, consume it and become immunized.

The **Trap-Vaccinate-Release (TVR)** program targets urban areas where residents and businesses are asked permission to leave baited traps on their property. After trapping, the raccoons are vaccinated, tagged and released. The goal is to return them to the wild, healthy and resistant to rabies.

What You Can Do To Help

- Do not put out feed that is attractive to mammals.
- Do not feed, touch or adopt wild animals as pets and be cautious of stray dogs and cats.
- Instruct children to leave wild animals alone. Be sure your child knows to tell you if they were bitten or scratched by an animal.
- Never leave your pets outdoors unattended and vaccinate them against rabies.
- Tightly cap trash cans and remove pet food that is not immediately consumed by your pet.
- Call a doctor and the Health Department if bitten.
- Call a veterinarian if a domestic animal is exposed to a wild animal or shows unusual illness or behavior.

Working Together

Federal, State and Local government agencies are working diligently to prohibit the dangerous spread of rabies in Lake County. Lake Metroparks will follow the law and do its part to combat the problem of rabies. You as an individual can do your part as well, by following the guidelines presented and by supporting the actions we must take at the Kevin P. Clinton Wildlife Center.

Thank you for your understanding.