



NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH AND MENTAL HYGIENE
Michelle Morse, MD, MPH
Acting Health Commissioner

2025 Veterinary Advisory #4 Summary of 2024 Animal Rabies Surveillance

- In 2024, 8 animals tested positive for rabies in the Bronx (1 bat, 1 cat, 1 raccoon), Queens (1 bat, 2 raccoons), and Staten Island (1 cat, 1 raccoon).
- Veterinarians should ensure that their clients' pets are up to date for rabies vaccination and educate pet owners regarding rabies prevention.
- Consider rabies in the differential diagnosis for any animal presenting with progressive neurological illness particularly if the animal is stray, has history of a bite wound of unknown origin, known exposure to a rabid animal or rabies vector species, or a dog imported from a country where the [canine rabies](#) variant circulates.
- For current information on rabies and animals testing positive for rabies in NYC, visit nyc.gov/health/rabies.

Please share with your colleagues in Veterinary Medicine and your staff.

March 20, 2025

Dear Colleagues,

This advisory is a summary of New York City (NYC) animal rabies testing data for 2024 (Appendix) and an update on 2025 rabies activity, to date. The most up-to-date rabies information is on NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene's (NYC Health Department) [website](#).

In 2024, 8 animals in NYC tested positive for rabies at the NYC Public Health Laboratory: 1 bat, 1 cat, and 1 raccoon from the Bronx, 1 bat and 2 raccoons from Queens, and 1 cat and 1 raccoon from Staten Island (Table 1).

Three people received rabies post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) for exposures to a rabid NYC cat: 1 person was bitten while rescuing a stray cat in Staten Island and 2 owners of an unvaccinated indoor/outdoor cat in the Bronx were bitten or scratched. Both cats were infected with raccoon variant rabies. In addition, a stray cat rescued in Nassau County and brought to Queens for veterinary treatments tested positive for rabies in NYC; 2 NYC and 5 Nassau residents were exposed to the cat and received rabies PEP. There were no pets exposed to rabid animals.

In early 2025, neighboring Nassau County reported 8 rabid animals since summer 2024, including 2 cats and 6 raccoons. Nassau County had been free of raccoon rabies since 2007 except for a raccoon in 2016 and cat in 2017 that were believed to have originated from outside the state/county. In November 2024, a rabid raccoon in Queens was identified near the Nassau border. The Nassau County, New York State, and NYC Health Departments are continuing to collaborate on surveillance and control measures. Oral rabies vaccine (ORV) was distributed in southwestern Nassau County in September 2024. ORV was not conducted in NYC in 2024 due to a lack of funding.

Rabies Vaccination for Dogs and Cats

As a reminder, maintaining vaccination against rabies is required for all dogs and cats in New York City. The New York City Health Code requires that all puppies and kittens receive their first rabies shot(s) by 4 months of age. Revaccination is required no later than one year after the primary vaccination and revaccinations administered at intervals thereafter, in accordance with the recommendations of the manufacturer of the U.S.D.A. approved rabies vaccine intended to maintain active immunization. Veterinarians should educate their clients that even indoor dogs and cats are at risk if they escape outside or if a rabid bat enters the home.

[Management guidelines for dogs and cats exposed to a rabies vector species or any rabid animal](#)

[Management guidelines for healthy dogs and cats that have bitten a person](#)

View additional information about rabies, including NYC summary data at nyc.gov/health/rabies. The following free resources are available for download or by calling 311.

- [Rabies: Protecting Your Pet](#) Brochure (PDF)
Other Languages: [Español](#) | [Русский](#) | [繁體中文](#)
- [Information for Veterinarians: Rabies Prevention Poster](#) (PDF)
- [Rabies Exposure and Biting Animals Management Flowcharts, Poster for Veterinarians](#) (PDF)

What All Veterinarians Can Do

EDUCATE clients to:

- Avoid contact with wild animals and stray animals.
- Make sure their dog or cat is up to date on its rabies vaccinations.
- Avoid leaving their pets outdoors unattended and feed them indoors.
- Avoid trying to separate animals that are fighting.
- Contact their veterinarian if their pet has been in contact with a raccoon, skunk, bat or any animal that might be rabid.

Report animal bites and suspect animal rabies cases to the NYC Health Department's Veterinary Public Health Services (VPHS) Animal Bite Unit

During business hours	VPHS Animal Bite Unit (ABU)	646-364-1799
After business hours	NYC Poison Control Center	212-POISONS (212-764-7667)

Questions? Call the NYC Health Department

Questions on rabies exposures in pets, animal bites, and other animal-related issues	Veterinary Public Health Services	646-364-1783
Questions on rabies exposures in people, PEP, and other human-related rabies issues	Bureau of Communicable Disease	347-396-2600
After business hours	NYC Poison Control Center	212-764-7667

As always, we appreciate your continued collaboration with our efforts to monitor public health issues in New York City.

Sincerely,

Asha Abdool, MPH; Renee King, MPH; Kevin Lovingood, MPH; Ryan MacDonald, MPH; Marc Paladini MPH, Christina Ng, MPH; Sally Slavinski, DVM, MPH, DACVPM

Zoonotic and Vector-borne Disease
Bureau of Communicable Disease
ZIVDU@health.nyc.gov
347-396-2600

Norma S. Torres, Director, Veterinary Public Health Services, Division of Environmental Health
Dawn Carcaterra, Supervisor, Animal Bite Unit, Veterinary Public Health Services
Jie Fu, Chief of Rabies Lab, Bureau of Public Health Laboratory

Visit our webpage for information and resources for veterinarians: [Zoonotic and Vector-borne Diseases: Information for Providers](#)

If you do not receive these alerts via email and would like to be added to the distribution list, email zivdu@health.nyc.gov

Report animal diseases to the NYC Health Department:

- Online through a [secure web-based reporting platform](#)
- Call 347-396-2600
- Fax the [Animal Disease Case Report form](#) to 347-396-2753

Report upon suspicion: Anthrax, brucellosis, glanders, influenza (novel with pandemic potential), mpox, plague, Q fever, rabies, SARS, tularemia

Report upon laboratory diagnosis: Arboviral encephalitides, carbapenem-resistant organism (CRO), leptospirosis, psittacosis, Rocky Mountain spotted fever, salmonellosis, tuberculosis

Report within 24 hours any outbreak or suspected outbreak of any disease, condition, or syndrome, of known or unknown etiology, which may pose a danger to public health.

Appendix

Table 1. NYC Rabies Testing* by Animal and Borough, 2024

ANIMAL	BRONX		BROOKLYN		MANHATTAN		QUEENS		STATEN ISLAND		NYC TOTAL	
	Tested	Positive	Tested	Positive	Tested	Positive	Tested	Positive	Tested	Positive	Tested	Positive
BAT	1	1	4	0	8	0	7	1	2	0	22	2
CAT	11	1	26	0	24	0	19	0	12	1	92	2
DOG	7	0	5	0	10	0	2	0	4	0	28	0
OPOSSUM	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	3	0
RACCOON	20	1	26	0	12	0	113	2	32	1	203	4
SKUNK	19	0	5	0	4	0	2	0	11	0	41	0
OTHER**	1	0	3	0	2	0	2	0	2	0	10	0
TOTAL	59	3	70	0	60	0	147	3	63	2	399	8

*Tested at NYC DOHMH Public Health Lab (PHL) (n=386) or New York State Wadsworth Center (n=13). Excludes 2 cats (1 positive) from Nassau County tested at NYC PHL and 2 animals unable to be tested.

**Other = 4 squirrels, 2 groundhogs, 1 each chipmunk, ferret, mouse, rat

Table 2. NYC Rabies Testing by Animal and Year, 2020-2024

ANIMAL	2020		2021		2022		2023		2024	
	Tested	Positive	Tested	Positive	Tested	Positive	Tested	Positive	Tested	Positive
BAT	38	1	18	0	22	2	30	1	22	2
CAT	83	5	70	3	88	3	70	1	92	2
DOG	25	0	30	0	24	0	36	0	28	0
GROUNDHOG	2	0	7	0	2	0	1	0	2	0
OPOSSUM	19	0	26	0	17	0	8	0	3	0
RACCOON	252	28	224	15	257	30	207	8	203	4
SKUNK	21	4	6	1	18	3	19	2	41	0
SQUIRREL	7	0	11	0	8	0	8	0	4	0
OTHER**	7	0	16	0	21	0	24	0	4	0
TOTAL	454	38	408	19	457	38	403	12	399	8

Includes 3 inconclusive tests: 1 bat in 2020 and 1 bat and cat in 2022

**Other = 36 rats, 15 mice, 4 chipmunks, 3 foxes, 2 deer, 2 ferrets, 2 rabbits, and 1 each bear, beaver, cattle, chinchilla, coyote, goat, horse, and sheep

Table 3. NYC Animal Rabies Testing by Borough and Year, 2020-2024

BOROUGH	2020		2021		2022		2023		2024	
	Tested	Positive	Tested	Positive	Tested	Positive	Tested	Positive	Tested	Positive
BRONX	76	14	45	4	75	13	102	1	59	3
BROOKLYN	69	1	60	0	152	2	87	1	70	0
MANHATTAN	61	2	68	1	58	0	83	1	60	0
QUEENS	153	3	180	3	132	17	101	4	147	3
STATEN ISLAND	95	18	55	11	40	6	30	5	63	2
TOTAL	454	38	408	19	457	38	403	12	399	8

Includes 3 inconclusive tests: 1 Manhattan in 2020, 1 Brooklyn and 1 Manhattan in 2022