

Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry

Wildlife Research and Monitoring Section
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Ministère des Richesses naturelles et des Forêts

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August 3, 2016

Dear Colleague,

The Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry is commencing its annual oral rabies vaccine (ORV) summer and fall bait distribution.

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

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

Please see the attached information package for:

- 1) Maps of the proposed baiting areas
- 2) Rabies Vaccine Bait Information Sheet

This ministry is committed to the research, control and eradication of rabies 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.

Since December 2015, there have been two fox strain cases in Perth County and over 150 cases of raccoon strain rabies in Hamilton, Haldimand-Norfolk, Niagara, and Brant counties with most of those occurring in the municipality of Hamilton.

The khaki-green coloured baits are made of vegetable based fats and wax with an attractant flavour (vanilla-sugar). A label with a toll-free 1-888-574-6656 telephone number

for the MNRF rabies information line and “Do not eat” warning are on the exterior of the bait; 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.) Exposure to the bait is not harmful to people or pets; however, in the unlikely event that people or pets come in contact with the vaccine contained in the bait, contacting a doctor or veterinarian as a precaution is recommended.

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 indigenous communities are all key to the continued success of Ontario's world-renowned rabies control program. If a person contracts rabies and does not receive treatment, the disease is fatal.

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

Regards,

Beverly Stevenson