

Rabies Management in British Columbia

Erin Fraser, DVM MSc

Public Health Veterinarian, BC Centre for Disease Control

Rabies is a serious zoonotic disease that is invariably fatal once contracted. It is a reportable animal disease both provincially and federally (*BC Animal Health Act* [2014], Canada's *Health of Animals Act*). Bats are the only known reservoir for rabies in British Columbia; a number of bat species can carry and transmit the virus.

It is estimated that <0.5% of bats in BC are infected but between 4 and 10% of bats that are tested for rabies are positive. Bats with altered behaviour are more likely to come into contact with people and animals and subsequently be sent for testing.

Any veterinarian who suspects rabies in an animal (dead or alive) should inform the BC Centre for Disease Control (BCCDC) Public Health Veterinarian at 604-829- 2110 to obtain assistance with risk assessment and management. Detailed guidelines can be found on BCCDC's website at: <http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/rabies>

These guidelines were developed by an expert panel of BC veterinarians and public health practitioners using evidence, expert opinion, and consensus.

A quick reference guide can also be found here:

http://www.bccdc.ca/Documents/rabies%20summary%20table_2017.pdf