

MEMORANDUM

TO: Local Health Departments, Illinois Department of Agriculture Animal Welfare, Illinois Department of Natural Resources

FROM: Communicable Disease Control Section

DATE: April 22, 2019

SUBJECT: **Animal Rabies Surveillance for 2018**

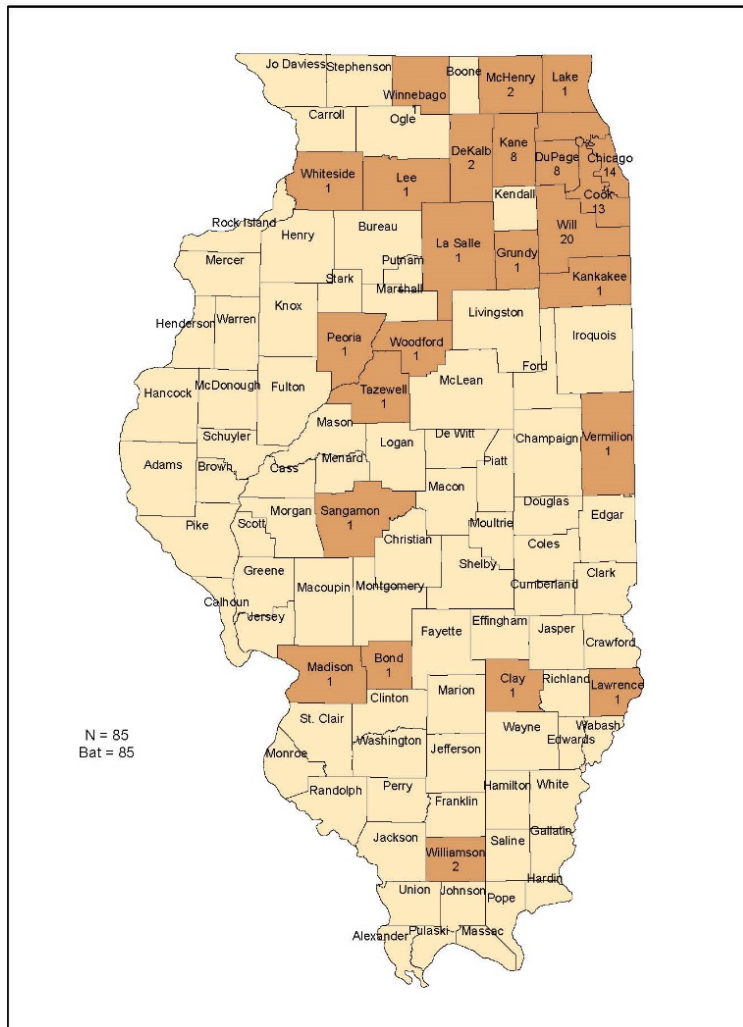
In 2018, a total of 3,888 animals from Illinois were submitted for rabies testing to the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) diagnostic laboratories. There were 57 animal brains not suitable for testing or not tested. Of the 3,831 animals tested, 85 were fluorescent antibody-positive for rabies. All rabid animals were bats. Animals testing positive for rabies from 2008 to 2018 are listed in Table 1. In 2018, the most frequently tested animals were bats (1,733), dogs (1,178), cats (584), raccoons (106), skunks (92) and squirrels (25). No dogs, horses, skunks or raccoons tested positive between 2008 and 2018. Geographic location of bats testing positive for rabies is shown in Figure 1.

Table 1. Rabies test positive animals by species and year in Illinois, 2008-2018

Species	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Bat	103	83	117	50	63	55	40	97	62	58	85
Cattle	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Cat	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Fox	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Skunk	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	103	83	117	51	63	55	40	97	63	58	85

Figure 1.

Positive Animal Rabies by County, Illinois 2018



BATS

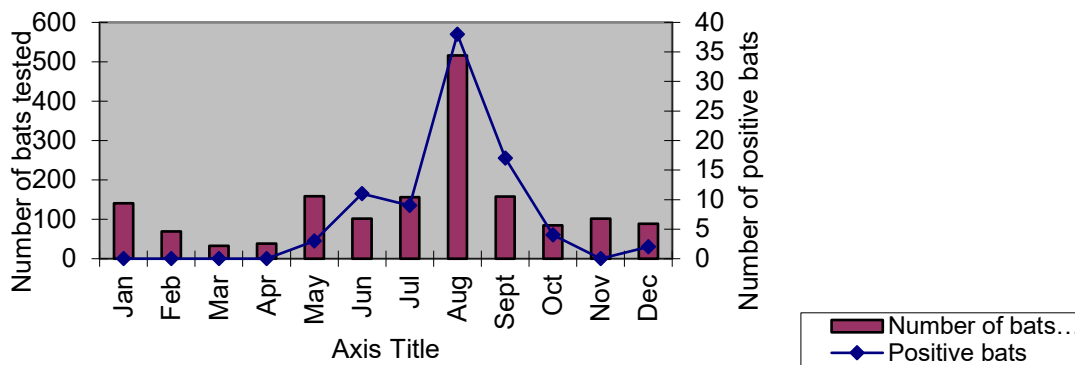
In 2018, bats were the only species identified with rabies in Illinois. In this year, 1,733 bats were tested for rabies. Of those tested, 1,648 were determined negative for the virus and there were 85 confirmed positive. An additional 29 bats were submitted for testing but specimens were unsatisfactory or untested. The percent of bats tested which were positive for rabies in 2018 was 4.9 percent (See Table 2).

Table 2. Bat rabies testing results in Illinois for 2018

Negative	Positive	Total Tested	% Positive
1,648	85	1,733	4.9

The majority of testing occurred in August when bats are very active and likely to come in contact with humans or pets, as demonstrated in Figure 2.

Figure 2. Number of all bats and positive bats tested in Illinois by month for 2018 (left y axis=number of bats tested, right y axis=positive bats)



SKUNKS AND OTHER TERRESTRIAL MAMMALS

In 2018, no skunks tested positive for rabies. Of the 3,381 animals tested, only 92 (2%) were skunks. The following 15 counties submitted skunks for rabies testing Cook (13), DuPage (15), Lake (12), Will (20), McHenry (6), Kane (16), Winnebago (2) and one each in Bureau, DeKalb, Fulton, Grundy, Jackson, Mclean, Sangamon and Williamson. One location of collection was unknown.

Please share the memorandum with your animal control partners. We appreciate all the rabies control and prevention efforts by local animal control and public health professionals.