

# WILDLIFE RABIES VACCINATION PROGRAM - METROPOLITAN NEW YORK

A cooperative effort involving the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, the Nassau County Health Department, USDA/APHIS Wildlife Services, Cornell University and Others

## The Metropolitan-NY Oral Rabies Vaccination (ORV) Program seeks to control and eventually eliminate terrestrial rabies from New York City.

**What:** The federally-licensed wildlife rabies vaccine is contained in brown baits comprised of fishmeal, fish oil, and wax. Aerial and ground methods are used to distribute baits into the environment.

**How:** Raccoons are vaccinated against rabies when they eat the wildlife rabies vaccine that is contained within the fishy baits.

**When:** Vaccine distribution is planned during August and early September, 2016.

**Where:** Brooklyn, Queens, Staten Island and a portion of Nassau County (Town of Hempstead):

*Bait Stations* will be filled in Brooklyn and Queens during the first two weeks of August.

*Vehicles* will be used to deploy baits in Nassau County during early September.

*A Helicopter* will distribute baits over Staten Island, the Gateway National Recreation Area, and Nassau County during early September.

Raccoons will also be live-trapped and released to evaluate the ORV program during October 2016. A small amount of blood will be taken from each animal to test for rabies immunity.

**Why:** During 2012-2015, Staten Island reported 66 terrestrial rabies cases and 8 cases were reported in Brooklyn. Rabies virus has been confirmed during most years in NYC, presenting a threat of eastward advance into Nassau and Suffolk Counties where rabies was eliminated during November 2007 and January 2009, respectively, following annual ORV campaigns. Rabies is nearly always fatal in unvaccinated animals, a costly health threat that impacts people, domestic animals and wildlife. Wildlife vaccination will help to reduce the number of rabies cases and prevent the continued spread of the virus within the region.

**Who:** Cornell University will conduct the vaccination program in cooperation with the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation, USDA/APHIS Wildlife Services, the Nassau County Department of Health, the National Parks Service, the New York City Police Department, and others.

### ORV Recommendations:

- Supervise children's outdoor activities during the bait distribution interval and for one week following
- Confine dogs and cats indoors and be sure to observe leash laws during the bait distribution interval and for one week afterwards. This will increase the probability of raccoon vaccination and will decrease the chance of pets finding the baits
- The bait and vaccine are not harmful to dogs or cats; however, an animal may vomit if it eats several baits. **DO NOT RISK BEING BITTEN WHILE TRYING TO REMOVE A BAIT FROM YOUR PET'S MOUTH**
- **WASH YOUR HANDS IMMEDIATELY** if you come into direct contact with the vaccine or bait, then call 212-764-7667
- Call 212-764-7667 if you see your pet with bait in its mouth
- If baits are observed in the environment, please leave them alone. The baits have a strong fishmeal scent that is not attractive to people or most other animals. (A label identifies each bait: "Rabies Vaccine Live Vaccinia Vector. Do Not Disturb, Merial, Inc. Us Vet Lic. No. 298 877-722-6725.")
- If a bait station is observed in the environment, please do not touch or move it. The baits will be removed by program personnel at a later date
- If a bait is intact and out in the open where pets or children may encounter it, please toss the bait under trees or bushes while wearing gloves or using a plastic bag

**IN THE EVENT OF DIRECT CONTACT WITH THE BAIT OR VACCINE, PLEASE CONTACT THE NYC HEALTH DEPARTMENT AT:**

**212-764-7667**

**General Information:** Rabies is a viral infection that affects the nervous system of raccoons and other mammals, including humans. The disease is generally fatal once clinical signs of infection occur. Wildlife vaccination will decrease the chance of human and domestic animal contact with terrestrial rabid animals. Rabies is usually transmitted through the bite of a rabid animal. However, the virus may also be transmitted when the saliva of a rabid animal comes into contact with cut, open, or scratched skin lesions. To reduce the risk of rabies exposure:

- Verify that your animals have current rabies vaccinations, including dogs, cats, ferrets, livestock and horses
- Keep pets (dogs, cats, ferrets) on a leash
- House pets and livestock indoors during evenings and nights
- Do not touch or have contact with any animal other than your own
- Do not touch dying or dead animals. If you must move a dead animal, use a shovel, wear heavy rubber gloves and double bag the carcass
- Warn your family against approaching any unknown animal -- wild or domestic -- especially those acting in an unusual manner
- Instruct your children to tell you immediately if they were bitten or scratched by any animal
- If a bat is found in a room where adults or children were sleeping, or if an adult enters a room and finds a bat with a child, **DO NOT RELEASE THE BAT**. Please notify the NYC Health Department immediately

- Do not leave pet food outdoors or feed unknown animals. Discourage unknown animals from seeking food and shelter in/near your home
- Do not attempt to trap wildlife on your property. Contract with a state-licensed, professional wildlife control officer
- Keep garbage containers tightly covered and avoid storing any food outside
- Remember that New York State law requires all dogs, cats and domesticated ferrets to be vaccinated against rabies

**Individuals bitten or scratched by any animal should immediately contact their physicians or seek medical help at a hospital emergency room.**

**For more information regarding rabies and wildlife vaccination, please visit the following websites:**

NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene:

<http://www.nyc.gov/html/doh/html/diseases/cdrab.shtml>

Nassau County Department of Health:

<http://www.nassaucountyny.gov/agencies/health/rabies.html>

Merial, Limited at: [www.rabioral.com](http://www.rabioral.com)

USDA/APHIS Wildlife

Services: <http://www.aphis.usda.gov/wildlife-damage/rabies>

NYS Department of

Health: <http://www.health.ny.gov/diseases/communicable/zoonoses/rabies/vaccfact.htm>

US Centers for Disease Control: <http://www.cdc.gov/RABIES/>

For general questions about the Wildlife Rabies Vaccination Program, please contact Cornell University at: 607-759-1367.



**Vaccine Baits**



**Bait Stations**

