

# 2025 Rabies Surveillance Report

March 2026

[Rabies](#) is a deadly viral disease of the brain primarily spread through bites from infected animals. In Vermont, rabies is most commonly found in wild animals such as raccoons, skunks, foxes, bats and woodchucks. Cats, dogs and livestock can also get rabies if they have not been vaccinated for rabies. The Vermont Department of Health Infectious Disease Epidemiology Program tracks and responds to rabies virus in animals. Throughout the year, the Vermont Department of Health Laboratory (VDHL) tests animals that may have exposed humans or domestic animals to rabies. With this information, the Department of Health can provide appropriate postexposure recommendations to Vermonters and their animals.

If you need help accessing or understanding this information, contact [ahs.vdhpubliccommunication@vermont.gov](mailto:ahs.vdhpubliccommunication@vermont.gov)

## 2025 Rabies by the Numbers

- **763 animals tested**
- **66 (8.7%) were rabid**
  - **44 (67%) raccoons**
  - **31 (47%) from Orleans County**

## Rabies Testing Results

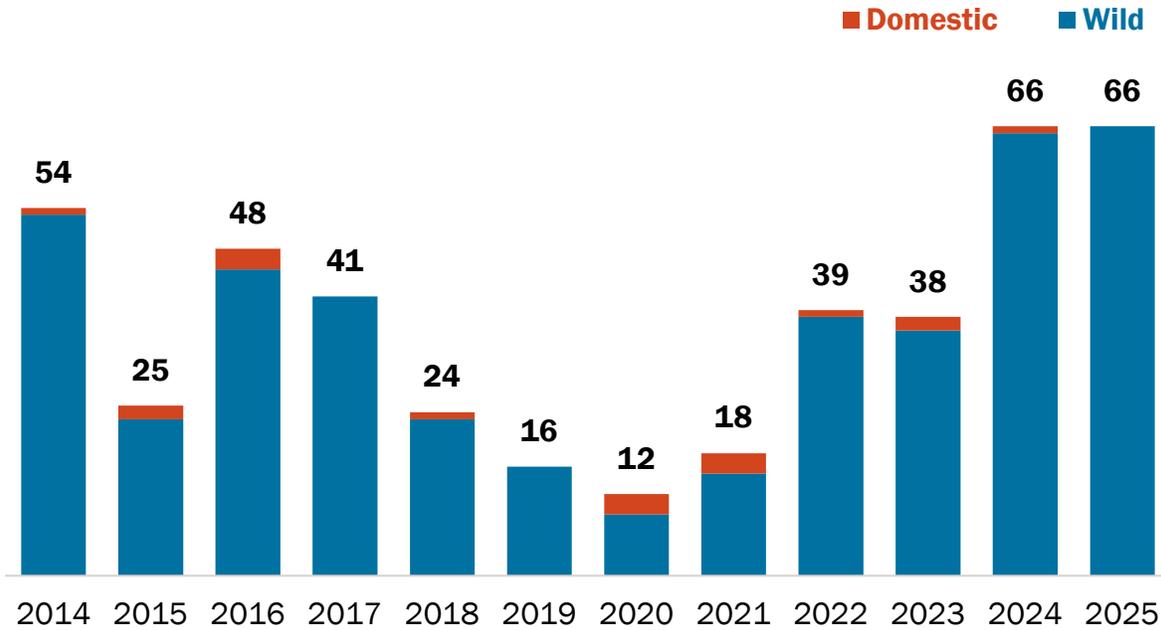
- 763 animals from 162 towns across Vermont were tested for rabies and 66 (8.7%) animals were positive: 44 raccoons, ten skunks, six bats, four foxes, one otter, and one woodchuck.
- Compared to 2024, this represents an 8.9% decrease in the total animals tested (n=838) and the same number of positive animals (n=66).
- Most rabid animals (n=31; 47%) were collected from Orleans County due to an outbreak in northern Vermont near the international border with Canada.
- Animals with the highest positivity rates were foxes (4/16; 25%); raccoons (44/259; 17%), woodchucks (1/6; 14%), skunks (10/118; 9%), and otters (1/20; 5%).
- Raccoons and bats were tested most frequently, 259 and 195 animals, respectively.



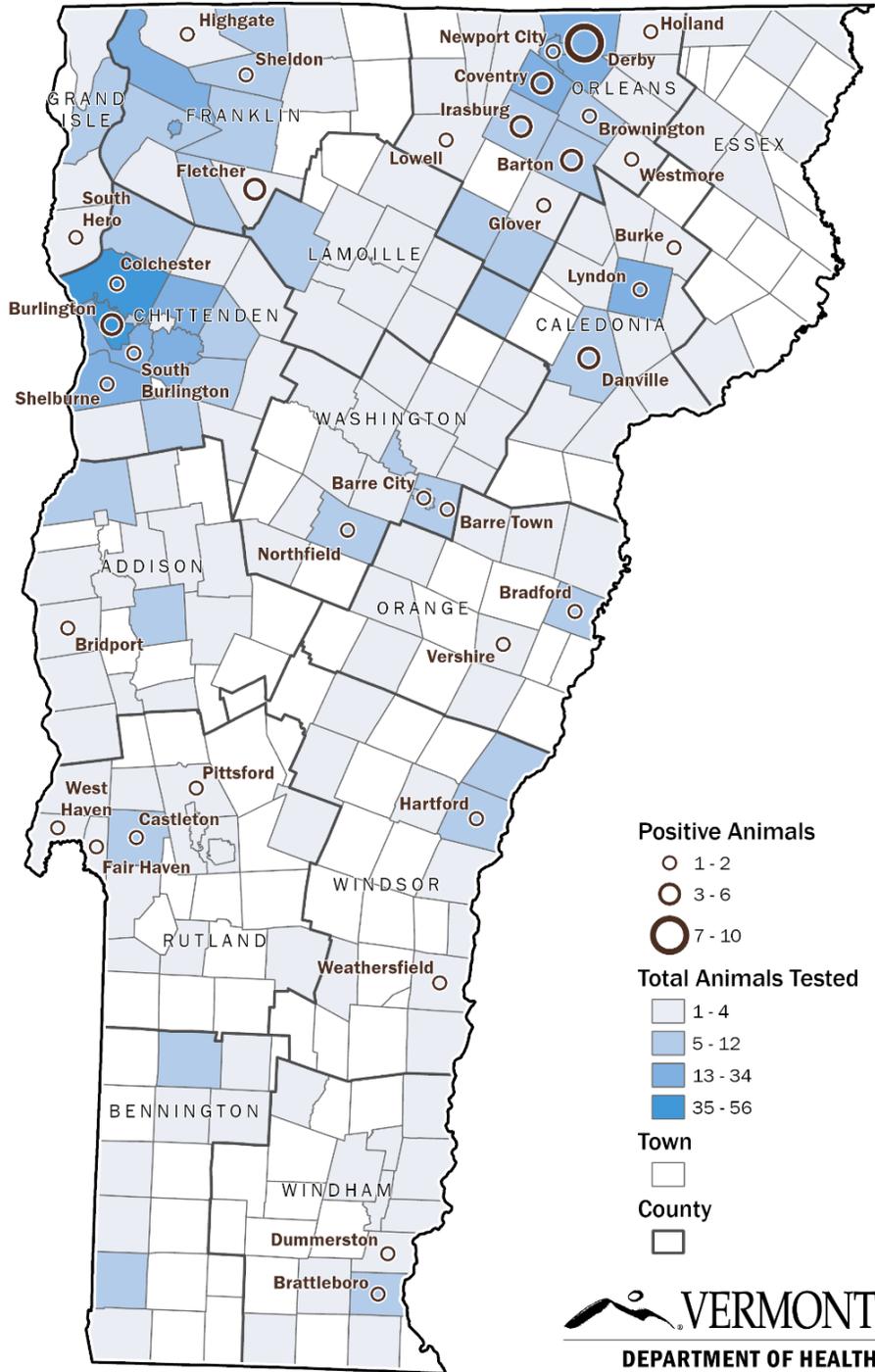
**HealthVermont.gov**  
802-863-7200



Annual reported cases of rabies increased during 2024–2025. All 66 cases of rabies in 2025 were in **wild animals**.



Animals from throughout the state were **tested** for rabies in 2025, most rabid animals were from Orleans (n=31; 47%) and Chittenden (n= 8; 12%) Counties.



## Rabies Postexposure Prophylaxis Surveillance

[Rabies Postexposure Prophylaxis \(rPEP\)](#) is a highly effective treatment to prevent human rabies following exposure to rabies virus. This involves wound cleaning and a series of injections given by a medical provider.

Decisions to start rPEP are based on [type of exposure](#), the [animal type, whether the animal is available for testing](#) or monitoring, and the [geographic location](#) where the exposure occurred.

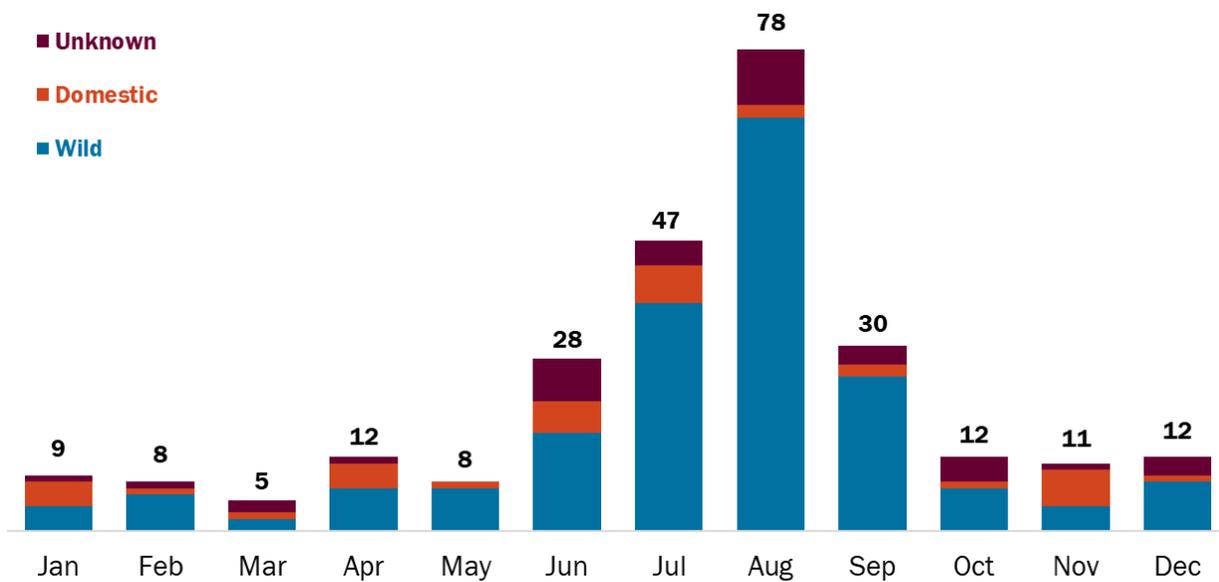
Health care providers should call the Vermont Department of Health at **802-863-7240** prior to administering rPEP to determine if it is necessary.

Health care providers must report the administration of rPEP by faxing a completed [Rabies Postexposure Prophylaxis Report Form](#) to the Health Department's Epidemiology Program at 802-951-4061 or securely e-mailing it to [AHS.VDHEpiLabRabies@vermont.gov](mailto:AHS.VDHEpiLabRabies@vermont.gov).

### Provider-reported rPEP

- In 2025, health care providers reported 260 administrations of rPEP in Vermonters.
- rPEP was administered most commonly because of exposure to bats (n=158; 61%), followed by dogs (n=43; 17%), raccoons (n=25; 10%), and cats (n=19; 7%).
- The median age of patients who received rPEP in 2024 was 33 years (range: <1–82 years); 55% were female.

### Provider-reported rPEP peaked in August 2025 and was most often given following exposures to **wild animals**.



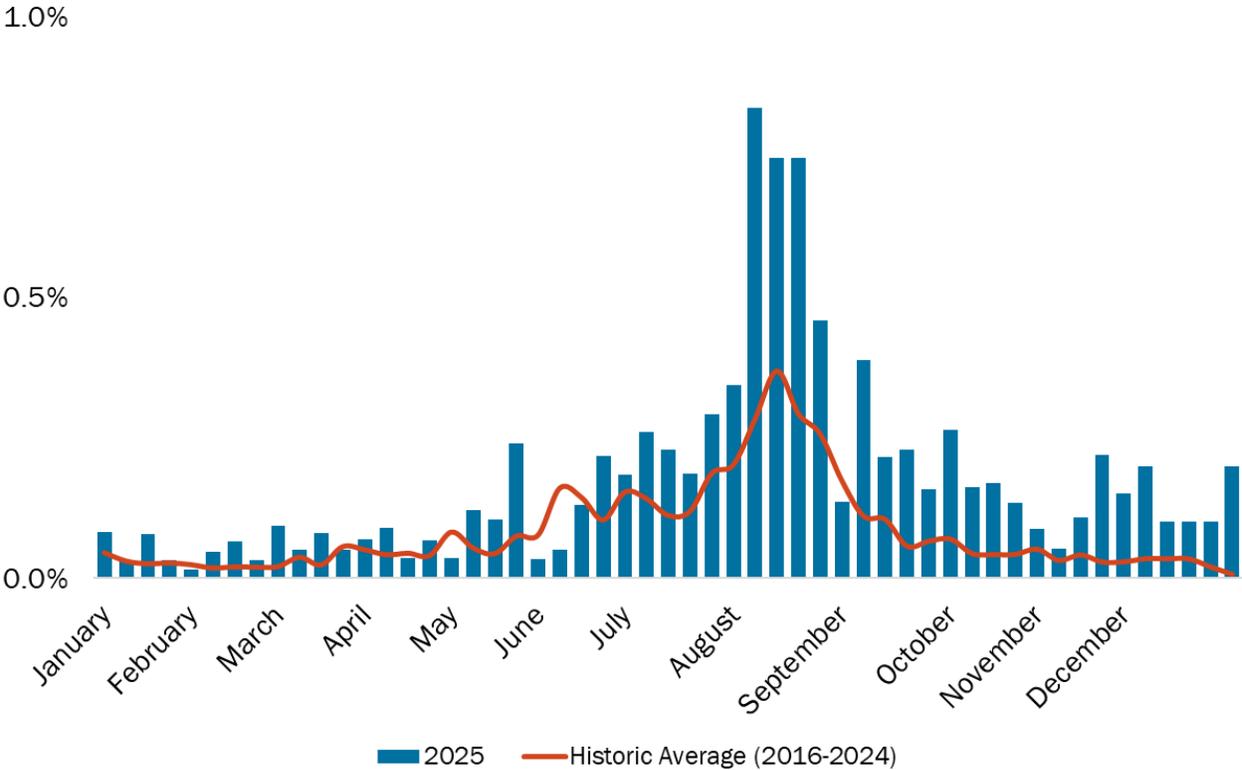
# Hospital Visits for rPEP

In 2025, the Health Department published a [rabies post-exposure prophylaxis \(rPEP\) dashboard](#). This dashboard uses syndromic surveillance data from Vermont emergency departments and urgent care facilities to provide near-real-time rPEP administration trends.

Syndromic surveillance identifies substantially more initial rPEP encounters than provider reports, with consistent seasonal patterns and animal exposure trends, including the summer peak driven largely by bat exposures.

Most emergency department and urgent care visits for rPEP administration in 2025 followed reported exposures to bats (n=675; 30%), dogs (n=291; 13%), and cats (n=144; 11%).

**Percentage of visits for rPEP peaked in August 2025 and were higher than the historic average for much of the year.**



## Key Takeaways

Rabies is a threat in Vermont. To protect yourself and your family, remember these tips:

- If an animal bites you or your pet, contact your health care provider or veterinarian for medical assistance
- Do not touch or pick up unfamiliar or wild animals – even baby animals – or try to feed them or make them into pets
- While only a small percentage of bats are infected with rabies, they are the leading cause of human rabies in the United States. If you find a bat in a room where a person or pet was sleeping, call the Vermont Rabies Hotline at **1-800-4-Rabies**. Do not release the bat, and only try to capture it if you can do so without getting bitten

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**Rabies is a deadly virus primarily spread through bites from wild animals. If you have had contact with a suspect rabid animal, call the Vermont Rabies Hotline at **1-800-4-RABIES (1-800-472-2437)****

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