



Department of Health
Agency of Human Services



17th Annual Rabies Bait Drop Underway August 19-25



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Vermont Department of Health
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USDA's Vermont Rabies Hotline
1-800-472-2437 (1-800-4-RABIES)
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BURLINGTON – When Robert Johnson, state public health veterinarian, learned of a lethargic skunk with a broken leg that was removed properly from old North Beach in Burlington two weeks ago by a city parks official, he was relieved.

“That’s a good outcome,” said Dr. Johnson, “because the skunk later tested positive for rabies. “We knew the animal had been handled properly by someone wearing gloves, and there was no chance for exposure.”

Vermont begins its 17th Annual Rabies Bait Drop on Aug. 19. The baits will be dropped by low-flying aircraft hired by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) into carefully plotted corridors of remote lowland areas and valleys along the Vermont border and northern Chittenden County. Officials will also distribute the baits by hand in urban areas. The baits are a dark green, sweet-smelling, vanilla coated blister pack. When wildlife eat the bait they are vaccinated.

Rabies is a viral disease found mainly in raccoons, foxes, bats and skunks that can infect domestic animals and people as well. The virus can spread through the bite or contact with saliva from an infected animal. Rabies vaccine – if given soon after a human is bitten by a rabid animal – is highly effective. Once the signs and symptoms of rabies start to appear, there is no treatment and the disease is almost always fatal.

Anyone who finds the bait should leave it untouched, unless it is discovered on a lawn or driveway. Remove the bait with a glove and wash your hands with soap and water.

The bait is not harmful to children or pets, but direct skin contact should be avoided.

To view a photo of the bait, visit: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/usdagov/7780297536/in/set-72157623983143606>.

Vermonters are asked to avoid any animal that shows strange behavior. Do not try to trap or capture the animal, but instead call the state’s Rabies Hotline at 1-800-472-2437 (1-800-4-RABIES).

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