

January 2020

Wildlife Rehabilitators of North Carolina

Wildlife Symposium

RVS and VETS

Minimize Risks, Optimize Outcomes

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Rabies

The Facts

What is Rabies?

Most important Lyssavirus globally, with multiple variants in the United States

- ALL MAMMALS are believed to be susceptible.
- Variants of the virus are maintained in the raccoon, skunk, fox and bat populations in the United States
- United States is free (at this time) of the Canine Variant.
- Transmitted animal to animal through bites, with a HIGHLY VARIABLE incubation period. Generally it is 3 to 12 weeks, but can range from several days to months, rarely exceeding 6 months.



What is Rabies?

Most important Lyssavirus globally, with multiple variants in the United States

- It is **COMMUNCABLE** during the period of salivary shedding.
- Shedding starts a few days **PRIOR** to the onset of clinical signs and **DURING** illness.



What is Rabies?

Clinical signs are VARIABLE and include:

- Inappetance
- Dysphagia
- Cranial nerve deficits
- Abnormal Behavior
- Ataxia
- Paralysis
- Altered vocalization
- seizures



Principles of Rabies Prevention and Control

Case Definition: Requires laboratory confirmation on the basis of either a + result for

- direct fluorescent antibody test (preferred to be performed on CNS tissue) or
- isolation of virus in cell culture or lab animal.

• RABIES VIRUS EXPOSURE

- Transmitted when introduced to bite wounds, open cuts in skin, or onto mucous Membranes from saliva or other infected material such as neural material.



Principles of Rabies Prevention and Control

- **Interdisciplinary Approach**

- Clear and Consistent communication and coordination among relevant animal and human health partners across and within all jurisdiction (International, National, State, and Local) is necessary to most effectively prevent and control rabies.

- Animal Control
- Law Enforcement
- Wildlife Officers
- Veterinarians
- Diagnosticians
- Public Health Professionals
- Physicians
- Animal & Pet Owners



Principles of Rabies Prevention and Control

- Awareness and Education
 - Ongoing Public Education
 - Responsible Pet Ownership
 - Routine Veterinary Care and Education
 - Professional Continuing Education





What is the New Law?

Rabies Vector Species Rehabilitation

Qualifications to Apply

Who gets to rehabilitate RVS?

- Held an ACTIVE rehabilitation license within or outside of NC for AT LEAST the previous 3 years
- Must have been actively rehabbing patients during this time
- Certify 12 hours of Rabies or Rabies Species- specific training, or a combination of.

Rabies Immunization

Current up-to-date rabies immunization in accordance with CDC

- For any STAFF MEMBER or VOLUNTER who may come IN CONTACT with a Rabies species.
- PROOF OF VACCINATION
 - Provided upon request
 - Kept at license holder facility

Veterinary Consent

Veterinarian who agrees to provide necessary medical treatment to the rabies species.

- License Holder **MUST** consult with veterinarian who agrees to provide medical treatment.
- Contact information **POSTED** at facility

Notify Animal Control Notify Health Department

Certify notification to the appropriate departments **PRIOR** to making the application to NCWRC

- Inform Animal Control and Health Department of anticipated activities
- Inform authorities of LOCATION
- Contact information for agencies POSTED at facility

Separate Facilities

Separate rabies vector species from non-rabies species.

- Prevent escape of the animal and exposure to
 - People
 - Pets
 - Livestock
 - Other captive wildlife
 - Other free-ranging wildlife
- Exterior caging
 - It must be locked
 - Either surrounded by double fencing or,
 - Solid wall barrier

Coordinate with Health Department

Regarding euthanasia and testing of Rabies Vector Species

- Coordinate about EUTHANASIA PROTOCOL
- Coordinate about TESTING
- Written protocols for testing are posted and made available to NCWRC upon request.

ALL RVS are considered POTENTIALLY INFECTED with Rabies Virus.

IF YOU ARE:

Scratched, Bitten, Exposed to saliva, Exposed to CSF fluid, Exposed to brain or spinal cord

Contact the Local Health
Department IMMEDIATELY

- Euthanasia of the animal and testing may be REQUIRED
- License holders MUST abide by all requests made by PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICIALS and NCRWRC personnel

NO DISPOSAL!

- SCRATCHES
- BITES
- DEATH IN CAPTIVITY
- Local Health Department investigates to determine if TESTING is NECESSARY

Considerations for the Veterinary Profession

Expectations

- We are expected to:
 - Provide medical support to the rehabilitator in which we consent to work with.
- Withdrawing of veterinary oversight is permitted at any time and for any reason



Grey Areas

- Will they call us prior to an exposure issue?
- Will they continue to practice BIO-SAFETY without our presence?
- Will the handling of the species be kept to Rabies Vaccinated Personnel ONLY?
- Should the rehabber be local to the counties you service?

The Risks

What can helping hurt?

Who can helping hurt?

Rabies Exposure

- Exposure to Self and Staff
- Exposure to Clients
- Rabies Vaccination Costs
 - Pender County Health Department
 - \$272.38 each
 - Series of 3 vaccinations
- Rabies Titers
 - Pender County Health Department
 - \$90.00
- Post Exposure Treatment
 - Thousands of \$ for treatment
 - Potential need to involve multiple counties

Rabies Exposure

- Exposure to Rehabilitation Staff and Volunteers
- Other Considerations
 - Potential for Media Coverage
 - Potential Expense for treatment if exposed.

Tips for Providing Responsible Care

Providing a Good Outcome

Good Outcomes

Be Picky. This is a serious, fatal disease.

- Get to know Animal Control. They are your first line of communication.
- Always wear GLOVES, Always!
- Sponsor someone who you can work with and COMMUNICATE with well.
- Clearly define the requirements for YOUR consent. These can be very specific.



Good Outcomes

(continued)

- Clearly define the requirements for YOUR consent. These can be very specific.
- Clearly define the cost associated with providing care.
- Establish clear protocols for your hospital staff on what is expected and required.
- Require a site visit to the Rehabilitator
 - Initially prior to consenting
 - Intermittently during the year or at peak times- baby season



Questions?

Comments

Provide your email address and I will follow up with anyone who has questions I can't answer

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