

**Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry**

Wildlife Research and Monitoring Section  
2140 East Bank Drive  
DNA Building, c/o Trent University  
Peterborough, ON K9L 1Z8

**Ministère des Richesses naturelles et des Forêts**

Phone: 1-888-574-6656  
Fax: 705-755-1559  
Email: rabies@ontario.ca

June 15, 2020

The Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNR) will be conducting Oral Rabies Vaccine (ORV) bait distribution and trap-vaccinate-release (TVR) programs in the summer and fall of 2020. Baiting and TVR operations will begin early July and continue until the end of October.

The ministry's rabies control operations are essential to public health and to the health of wildlife. With the current COVID-19 outbreak, additional health and safety measures have been put into place using the best available information from Public Health Ontario to deliver this program safely and minimize risks to staff, the public, and wildlife. The ministry will continue to re-evaluate as the response to the COVID-19 outbreak continues.

Please find attached:

- 1) Map of planned baiting area for 2020
- 2) Rabies Vaccine Bait Information Sheet

Per the attached map, rabies vaccine bait distribution will be conducted in rural areas with MNR aircraft and by hand in urban areas by MNR wildlife technicians. These are the details of bait distribution work in 2020 (dates are subject to change depending on weather conditions):

- Yellow shaded areas will be completed with a combination of Twin Otter airplane and Eurocopter EC130 helicopter. Twin Otter flights will occur from August 17 through to August 28, with Eurocopter EC130 flights occurring August 10 to 14 and September 8 to 11.
- The brown shaded area will be completed by a Twin Otter airplane between August 17 and 21.
- Urban hand baiting, including the use of temporary feeding stations, will occur in the orange shaded areas starting in the first week of July and continue through to the end of October.
- Live trapping and vaccinating wildlife (trap-vaccinate-release) will occur in the areas surrounding Hamilton shaded in pink starting in the first week of July and will continue through to the end of October.
- Preventative baiting of the purple shaded areas in eastern Ontario will take place in mid-August and will take one day to complete.

In addition to the activities mentioned above, MNR may conduct localized rapid response baiting and trap-vaccinate-release measures, which would take place in the event of a raccoon or fox strain rabies case outside of the planned baiting area.

The ministry is committed to the research, surveillance, control and elimination of the recent outbreak of rabies in southwestern Ontario to prevent the disease from spreading. Since the start of the rabies outbreak in 2015, the first of its kind in over a decade, MNRF has taken quick action to protect communities, distributing over five million vaccine baits by air and ground. There was a 70 per cent decrease in the number of rabies cases in 2019, from 2018. There were no new cases of rabies in our fox strain surveillance area (brown shaded area on the map), which, in keeping with World Health Organization guidelines, has led to a decrease in the control zone where there have been no reported cases in over two years.

Any warm-blooded mammal can contract rabies. If a human contracts rabies and does not receive treatment, the disease is fatal.

The khaki-green coloured bait being distributed by hand and by aircraft is made of wax-fat with an attractant flavour (vanilla-sugar). A label with a toll-free telephone number (1-888-574-6656) and the message "Do not eat" is located on the exterior of the bait, and a plastic package containing the liquid rabies vaccine is embedded in the centre. If found, the bait should not be touched, but left for raccoons, skunks and foxes to consume. (See attached bait identification hand out for detailed description.) Ontario's rabies vaccine baits have been tested to ensure they are safe for wildlife, people and pets. However, eating a vaccine bait does not replace the regular rabies vaccination provided by a veterinarian for your pet. If your pet has eaten a bait and you are concerned, contact your vet as a precaution.

Ontario's rabies control program is a joint effort that receives important input and contributions from a variety of partners across the province. Partnerships with provincial ministries, federal agencies, regional health units, municipalities, wildlife rehabilitators, licensed trappers, wildlife control agents and Indigenous communities are all key to the continued success of Ontario's rabies control program.

For further information about rabies in Ontario, please visit [Ontario.ca/rabies](https://ontario.ca/rabies) or contact MNRF's rabies information line at 1-888-574-6656.

Larissa Nituch  
Rabies Science Operations Supervisor

705-313-2043 (cell)  
[Larissa.Nituch@ontario.ca](mailto:Larissa.Nituch@ontario.ca)