

# HUNTERDON COUNTY DIVISION OF PUBLIC HEALTH

PO Box 2900, Flemington, New Jersey 08822



**Notification**

## **NJLINCS Health Alert Network**

### **Public Health Update**

*Distributed by the New Jersey Department of Health*

Subject: NJ Rabies Cases, January 1 - December 31, 2015

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Attachments: 2015\_Rabies\_Cases\_Jan\_-\_Dec.pdf

Public Health Update: New Jersey Animal Rabies Cases by County and Species,  
January 1 - December 31, 2015

Please distribute this information to all veterinarians, animal control officers, public health nurses, health care providers and other professional partners who are involved with rabies situations.

Attached please find the summary of New Jersey Animal Rabies Cases by County and Species for January 1 through December 31, 2015.

New Jersey has both raccoon and bat rabies virus variants, existing in separate ecologic cycles in the State. Raccoons cycle the raccoon variant, and the wildlife species most commonly infected by rabid raccoons are (in order of incidence) skunks, foxes and groundhogs. Bat variant rabies virus cycles predominately among the bat population, and is a significant public health concern because the majority of human rabies cases acquired in the United States are from bat exposures. However, all mammals are susceptible to all variants of the rabies virus.

In 2015, New Jersey had 228 terrestrial animals and 78 bats confirmed to be infected with rabies via testing at the New Jersey Public Health and Environmental Laboratories (PHEL). This is less than the 270 terrestrial and 78 bats identified in the same time period of 2014. Monmouth

For questions regarding this information, please contact the **Hunterdon County Division of Public Health** at  
(908) 788-1351 or [health@co.hunterdon.nj.us](mailto:health@co.hunterdon.nj.us)

County had the highest number of rabies cases, including 17 raccoons, 2 skunk, 2 fox, 2 cats and 6 bats confirmed rabid.

The number of specimens tested at PHEL also decreased from 3680 in 2014 to 2964 in the past year. This is most likely due to health officers and their staff being more selective in submission of specimens (submitting only those for which there will be public health action in response to the result). For example, bats found in buildings that do not meet the definition for bat exposures or wildlife that have not bitten or exposed people should not be submitted for testing, unless the test results will result in public health action. The NJDOH requests health officers and their staff continue their vigilance in 2016.

The NJDOH would like to remind health officers and their staff that it is the duty of the local health department to ensure that specimens are properly packaged and submitted to the laboratory on a timely basis. For specimens sent to PHEL via couriers, local health department staff need to follow-up with the courier site to ensure that specimens were picked-up and a result is received. For more information, please refer to the guidance document titled "Packaging and Transport of Animal Rabies Specimens to the New Jersey Rabies Laboratory" located at <http://www.state.nj.us/health/cd/documents/faq/specimentophel.pdf>

For more information on rabies visit the NJDOH website (<http://www.state.nj.ushealth/cd/rabies/technifo.shtml>) or contact the NJDOH Infectious and Zoonotic Disease Program at 609-826-4872.

Thank you for your cooperation.

NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH  
Division of Epidemiology, Environmental, and Occupational Health  
Infectious and Zoonotic Diseases Program

**NEW JERSEY ANIMAL RABIES CASES BY COUNTY AND SPECIES**  
January 1 - December 31, 2015

COUNTY	Raccoon		Skunk		Fox		Cat		Groundhog		Bovine	Equine	Dog***	Ferret	Other Domestic*		Deer	Other Wild**		Total Terrestrial	Bats						
Atlantic	1	231	2	27	1	16		14		2		1								4	291	6					
Bergen	11	292	5	111			1	40		19				1		1			2	3	19	467	5				
Burlington	7	492	2	84	4	24	1	40		13		1								1	14	655	5				
Camden	10	152	3	20		1	1	20		1											14	194	1				
Cape May	5	125		23		2		2												1	5	153	2				
Cumberland	8	200	2	53		2	1	12													11	267					
Essex	3	143		24			1	15		7			1			2		1	1	1	4	194	4				
Gloucester	8	172	7	72		9		20		2		1							2	15	278	11					
Hudson	1	14		5				5												1	24	1					
Hunterdon	9	388		42		6	1	32	2	13		2		1		1		4	1	12	491	3					
Mercer	7	350	3	24		12	1	17		5				1						11	409	4					
Middlesex	4	192		74	1	7	2	24	1	12										8	309	6					
Monmouth	17	469	2	56	2	18	2	37		11		1								23	596	6					
Morris	13	471	3	101	1	17		25	1	16		1				3		1	3	18	639	7					
Ocean	18	381	5	96	1	16	1	34		12			1							25	540	1					
Passaic	6	214	1	57		6		21		12		2						1	1	7	314	1					
Salem	7	79	1	15	1	3		6		1		1	1							9	106	1					
Somerset	6	348	2	56		14		20		9		2				3			2	8	454	8					
Sussex	3	257	2	108		17	1	20		21		4		2					1	6	430						
Union	8	110	1	28		1	1	11		1										10	151	2					
Warren	2	263	1	67		12	1	28		12		5	1			1		2	3	4	394	4					
Unknown		1																			1						
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>154</b>	<b>5344</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>1143</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>183</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>443</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>169</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>228</b>	<b>7357</b>	<b>78</b>

NUMBERS IN WHITE COLUMNS REPRESENT YEAR-TO-DATE TOTALS (January 1 through December 31, 2015)

NUMBERS IN SHADED COLUMNS REPRESENT EPIZOOTIC TOTALS (January 1989 through December 2015)

\*Other Domestic includes 9 rabbits, 1 goat and 1 sheep

\*\*Other Wild includes 5 otters, 4 opossums, 7 coyotes, 2 beavers, and 1 bear

\*\*\*One dog diagnosed in Essex County during 2008 acquired rabies in Iraq and became ill shortly after importation into NJ

Summary of Rabies Specimens Tested and Positive Cases by Year, New Jersey				
Year	Specimen Tested	Terrestrial Cases	Bat Cases	Total Cases
2012	3172	241	68	309
2013	3207	249	66	315
2014	3680	270	78	348
2015	2964	228	78	306

Cats have accounted for 90% of the domestic animal cases in New Jersey since 1989. For the last 5 years there has been an average of 16 cats infected with rabies annually.