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Rabies surveillance in the United States during 1995.

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Abstract

In 1995, 49 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico reported 7,877 cases of rabies in nonhuman animals and 4 cases in human beings to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Nearly 92% (7,247 cases) were wild animals, whereas 8% (630 cases) were domestic species. The total number of reported cases decreased 4.2% from that of 1994 (8,230 cases). Most of the decline was the result of 17.1% fewer reported cases of rabies in raccoons in areas of the Northeast, where rabies is now enzootic rather than epizootic. Exceptions to this decline were detected in states where the virus has only recently entered raccoon populations or where ongoing epizootics persist. States experiencing increasing epizootic activity associated with this variant include Maine (3 cases in 1993 to 101 cases in 1995), North Carolina (9 cases in 1990 to 466 cases in 1995), Rhode Island (1 case in 1993 to 324 cases in 1995), and Vermont (45 cases in 1993 to 179 cases in 1995). The raccoon variant of the rabies virus is now present in Alabama, Pennsylvania, Vermont, West Virginia, and all Atlantic Seaboard states from Florida to Maine. In Ohio, this variant, last detected in 1992 as a single case, was again detected in 1996. Epizootics of rabies in foxes in west central Texas and in dogs and coyotes in southern Texas attributable to canine variants continue, with this state reporting 137 rabid foxes, 55 rabid dogs, and 80 of the 83 cases in coyotes during 1995. The number of rabid bats (787) increased by almost 25%, with cases reported by 47 of the 48 contiguous states. Nationally, reported cases of rabies in cattle (136) and cats (288) increased by 22.5 and 7.9%, respectively, whereas cases in dogs (146) decreased by 4.6%. Cats continued to be the domestic animal most frequently reported rabid. The cases of rabies reported in human beings were all caused by viral variants associated with bats. Eighteen states and Puerto Rico reported decreases in rabies in animals in 1995, compared with 28 states and the District of Columbia in 1994. Hawaii was the only state that did not report a case of rabies in 1995.

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