

Rabies

Rabies is an acute infection of the central nervous system caused by a neurotropic rhabdovirus of the genus *Lyssavirus*. All mammals, including humans, are susceptible to rabies. In humans, rabies causes a rapidly progressive and fatal encephalomyelitis. The incubation period in humans is usually two to 12 weeks, but there have been documented incubation periods as long as seven years. Bites from infected animals constitute the primary route of transmission. Transplanted organs including corneas from patients with undiagnosed rabies have also caused infection in recipients.

The Pacific Northwest is considered to be free of terrestrial rabies. In Oregon, the main reservoirs of rabies are bats and animals such as foxes and cats that may come in contact with rabid bats. An average of 10% of the bats tested in Oregon are positive for rabies. This is a targeted sample of bats that have bitten humans and animals. Bat contact and bat bites should be carefully evaluated in a timely manner. Twelve bats tested positive in 2007, down from a 20-year high of 23 rabid bats in 2006.

Oregon State Public Health Laboratories will test most human exposures and Oregon State University, Veterinary Diagnostic laboratory should test for animal-to-animal exposures. All potential human exposures should result in a call to a local public health department office.

Persons not previously immunized for rabies who are exposed to a rabid animal should obtain human rabies immune globulin (HRIG) infiltrated at the site of the bite and five doses of rabies vaccine, one each on days 0, 3, 7, 14 and 28.

Though bats are the reservoir in Oregon, canine rabies still accounts for the majority of human rabies cases worldwide. Travelers to rabies-enzootic countries should be warned to seek immediate medical care if they are bitten by any mammal.

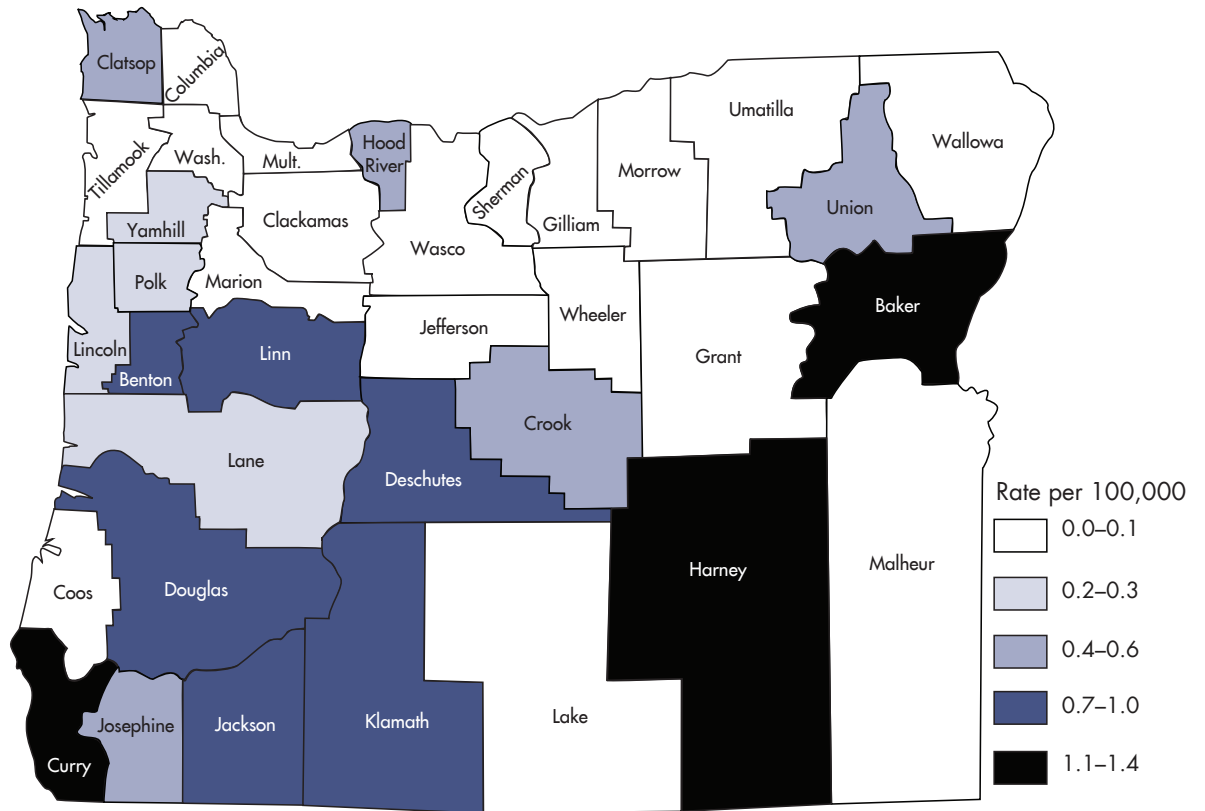
Additional information and an algorithm to follow for assessment of rabies risk are provided here. For a larger copy of this algorithm visit: www.oregon.gov/DHS/ph/acd/diseases/rabies/Visio-RabiesAlgorithm2_08.pdf

Rabies tests: Oregon, 1990–2007

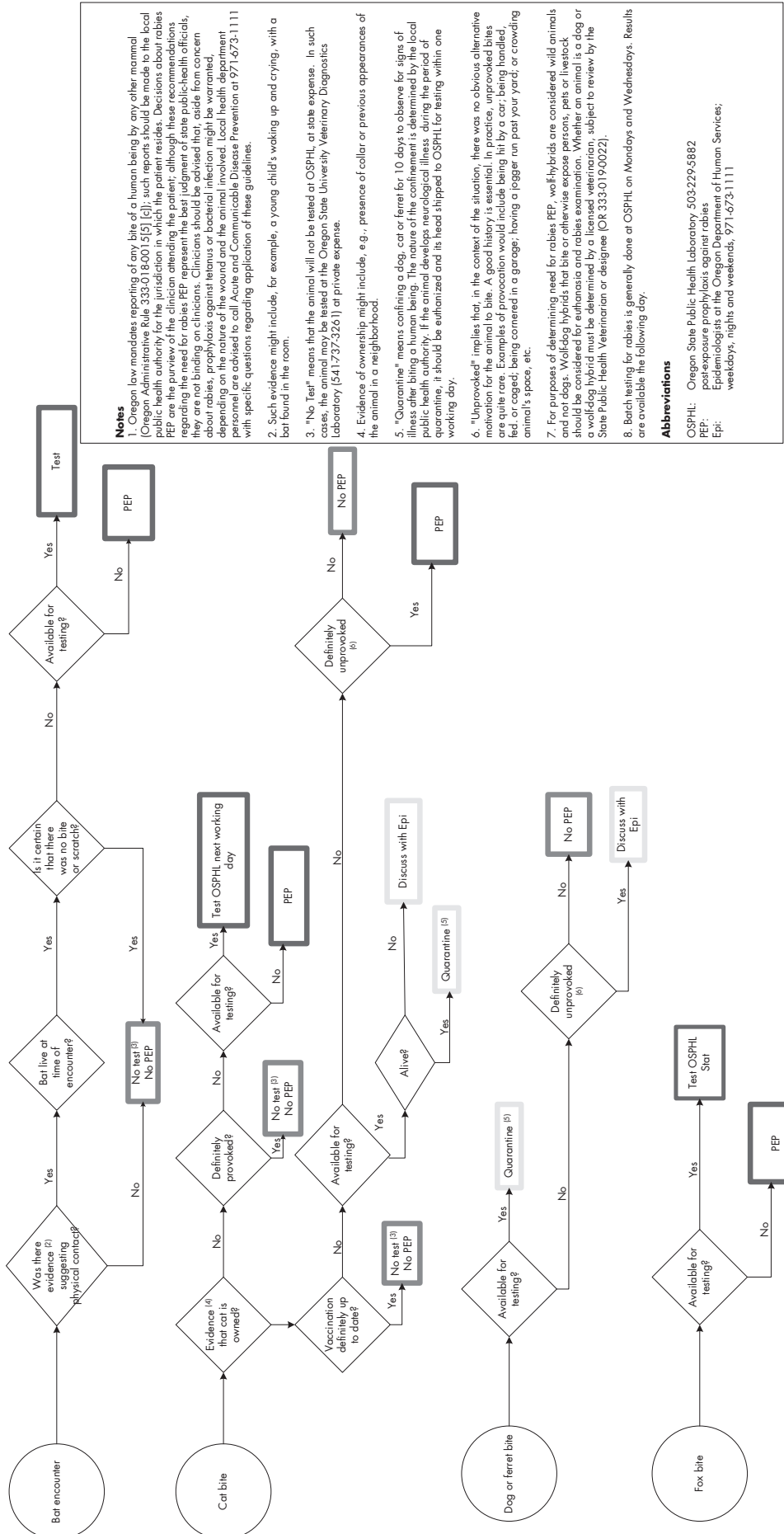
(Number of positive/total tested)

Year	Bat	Cat	Dog	Fox	Other animals
1990	1/29	0/61	0/34	0/1	0/14
1991	4/40	1/85	1/54	1/4	0/19
1992	2/29	0/98	0/54	0/4	0/54
1993	2/43	1/96	0/34	4/10	0/59
1994	10/47	0/88	0/58	3/7	0/78
1995	3/47	0/98	0/61	5/5	0/159
1996	3/48	0/51	0/33	0/5	0/58
1997	14/116	1/83	0/52	0/6	0/45
1998	6/95	0/95	0/56	0/3	0/49
1999	11/115	1/95	0/45	0/1	1/47 (Cow)
2000	8/73	0/79	0/56	1/4	0/4
2001	4/59	0/67	0/46	0/1	0/41
2002	12/134	0/102	0/27	2/4	0/29
2003	6/61	0/75	0/36	1/5	0/39
2004	7/88	0/105	0/42	0/2	0/27
2005	8/83	0/100	0/48	0/1	0/23
2006	23/126	0/72	0/26	2/4	0/41
2007	12/153	0/80	0/33	0/1	0/26
Totals	136/1386 9.8%	4/1530 0.26%	1/798 0.12%	19/68 28%	1/812 0.1%

Incidence of animal rabies cases by county: Oregon, 1998–2007



Algorithm for Prevention of Rabies After Animal Encounters in Oregon (1)



Rabies testing, Oregon 1991-2007

Animal	Positive	Tested	% Positive
Bat	136	1,386	9.8%
Cat	4	1,530	0.26%
Dog	1	798	0.12%
Fox	19	68	28%



Oregon Department of Human Services
 Office of Disease Prevention and Epidemiology
 Acute and Communicable Disease Prevention