

Wildlife Rabies in the United States

Frequently Asked Questions



Is wildlife rabies a problem in the United States?

Yes. While vaccination of domestic animals has been extremely effective in reducing the thread of rabies, wildlife remains the major source especially raccoons, coyotes, foxes and skunks.

Can infected wildlife spread rabies to humans?

Yes. Rabies can be spread directly through a bite or indirectly through dogs and cats that are bitten by infected wildlife. Raccoons are especially a problem in the eastern part of the country and coyotes in the west.

How is vaccination of wildlife accomplished?

Oral vaccine is contained in a bait that is distributed in remote areas by airplanes and helicopters, and by vehicles in populated areas.

Is wildlife vaccination effective?

Oral vaccination is very effective for raccoons and coyotes. However, it is important that vaccination programs be maintained in order to ensure effectiveness. Currently, research is being conducted on foxes.



What does the bait look like?

The bait comes in two formats: fish meal coated sachet and fish meal polymer block. Both baits consist of a sachet packet filled with rabies vaccine and are readily consumed by wildlife.

What should be done if the bait is found in the field?

If the bait is found call the telephone number printed on the label. Do not disturb the bait.

Can the bait be purchased by a homeowner?

No. It is only sold to government agencies that conduct thorough campaigns in a given area, thus ensuring its effectiveness. If you are aware of a wildlife problem in your area, you should contact government officials at the local, state and national levels to let them know you support oral rabies vaccination of wildlife.

