



# Wildlife Matters

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## Bird Flu Monitoring Expands Nationally

By JOHN HEILPRIN, Associated Press Writer

The government has expanded its monitoring of wild migratory birds for a deadly bird flu virus to cover the entire nation and U.S. territories in the Pacific.

Scientists in the lower 48 states, Hawaii and other Pacific islands will begin keeping an eye out for the deadly H5N1 strain of the avian flu that has killed more than 100 people, mostly in Asia.

Monitoring began just before summer in Alaska, where the first migratory birds from Asia began arriving.

"This move to test thousands more wild birds throughout the country will help us to quickly identify, respond and control the virus if it arrives in the United States," said Agriculture Secretary Mike Johanns. "Because we cannot control wild birds, our best protection is an early warning system."

Interior Secretary Dirk Kempthorne said more coordinated monitoring by federal agencies, states and universities "will be important this fall as birds now nesting in Alaska and Canada begin their migration south through the continental United States."

## Raccoons and Rabies in Tennessee

From the TWRA Website

Raccoons are capable of transmitting rabies, canine distemper and parvovirus to domestic dogs and rabies and roundworms to humans. Disease may become a problem when populations reach levels that cannot be supported by available food and habitat. Raccoons have few natural predators. Therefore, hunters and trappers have been the primary means of population control. Hunters harvest thousands of raccoons annually, this maintains the population at a more controllable level. Many raccoons are killed by vehicles while crossing roadways, particularly in the spring when the young are dispersing and the males are searching for mates.



The Agriculture and Interior departments are providing \$4 million to state agencies to collect samples from specific species of migratory birds winging along four major U.S. migratory bird flyways. Congress budgeted \$29 million for monitoring for the highly pathogenic strain of bird flu.

Feces or tissue samples from 75,000 to 100,000 wild bird will be collected, along with 50,000 samples of the water and ground that birds come into contact with. Locations where the samples will be collected will vary depending on weather and habitat conditions.

Likely sites include national and state wildlife refuges and parks, city ponds and parks, and private lands where owners have given approval.

Typically, the virus is spread by direct contact with contaminated birds. Scientists fear the virus could mutate and pass from person to person, leading to a pandemic.

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For current information on Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI), check out:

<http://wildlifedisease.nbii.gov/ai/>



Rabies, also known as "hydrophobia" is a term that frightens many people. Rabies is a fatal disease that affects all mammals including human beings. It is caused by a virus that attacks the central nervous system causing inflammation of the brain. The virus lives in the saliva of infected animals. The disease is most often transmitted through the bite of a rabid animal. Inhalation of rabies virus has been known to occur, but only in very special circumstances (such as inhalation in confined areas). The incubation period, the time (cont.)

## Critter Pics

by Katy Hea



## Raccoon Rabies (cont.)

between exposure to the disease and the onset of symptoms, varies from a few days to several months. The rabid animal may appear healthy while incubating the rabies virus for several months before contracting clinical symptoms and spreading the virus.

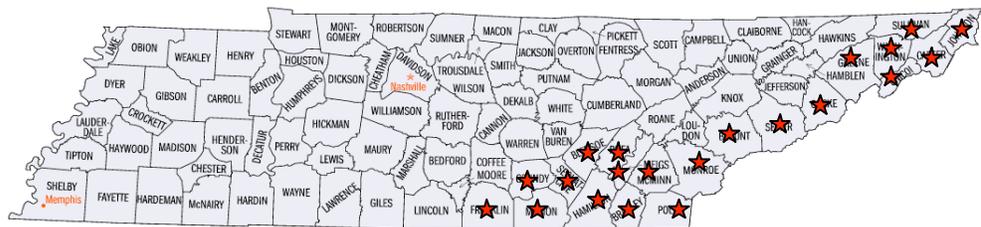
Raccoon strain rabies is a strain of rabies carried mainly by raccoons. Raccoon strain rabies is still rabies. It is spread to other wildlife species, domestic animals, pets and humans through the saliva of an infected animal in the same way as other strains of rabies. The only difference is that it is spread primarily by raccoons.

Raccoon strain rabies was first documented in Tennessee in June, 2003. Four positive cases were discovered in raccoons in Carter County and one positive case was found in a feral cat in Johnson County. A second occurrence of raccoon strain rabies was discovered in January, 2004. Seven

raccoons tested positive for raccoon strain rabies in Hamilton County.

The United States Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Service, Wildlife Services launched an oral rabies vaccination program in 2002. The goal of the program is to stop the westward spread of the raccoon strain rabies. Oral rabies vaccine has been distributed by aircraft in East Tennessee. Following distribution of the oral vaccine, active rabies surveillance has been conducted in the baiting zone. The following is a list of counties in the baiting/surveillance zone: Franklin, Grundy, Marion, Sequatchie, Bledsoe, Hamilton, Rhea, Meigs, McMinn, Bradley, Polk, Monroe, Blount, Sevier, Cocke, Greene, Washington, Unicoi, Sullivan, Carter, and Johnson Counties.

For more information, go to the TWRA website: <http://tennessee.gov/twra/wildlife/raccoon.html>



Counties marked with a red star are in the baiting /surveillance zone



## Rabies Vaccine Distributed Across Appalachian States

Wildlife Services, a program within the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service will distribute oral rabies vaccine baits beginning on, or about August 8, to prevent the spread of raccoon rabies in portions of Maryland, North Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia and West Virginia. Baits containing oral rabies vaccine will be distributed over rural areas using low-flying twin-engine aircraft. Hand baiting will occur in populated regions using ground-based vehicles. The projected two-week program will target raccoons and result in the distribution of approximately 4.3 million baits covering roughly 20,535 total square miles across five states.

Source: Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service



## CATS!!!

By KATHY DOLAN

Cats are a part of rehabilitation. How many times when assessing a situation or doing an in-take history do you hear, "My cat brought home this baby rabbit, bird..."? As lovable as cats are, and this author has two house cats, wildlife and cats do not mix. Cats are natural, compulsive hunters. Even well fed cats hunt. They are attracted by and will attack movement. They cannot help themselves. It is just part of their nature.

Annually, free-roaming cats account for millions of deaths to wildlife in the US. In some cases cats are considered one of the top three causes for species extinctions, along with loss of habitat and habitat fragmentation. Because cats are not a natural predator species, wildlife has not evolved the appropriate defenses to deal with or detect cats. Young animals are



## CATS!!! (cont.)

especially defenseless against cats. Even if a cat does not outright kill an animal, the bacteria that reside normally in a cat's mouth, are deadly to most wildlife. Specifically, *Pasteurella multocida* when introduced into even the tiniest wound spreads rapidly through an animal's body causing death within 18hrs or less, unless antibiotics are started quickly.

What can be done about cat predation on wildlife? Educate cat owners. As you talk with the public work in the following facts:

- free roaming or outdoor cats decimate wildlife populations each year
- outdoor cats have shorter life spans than indoor cats
- outdoor cats are exposed to more infectious diseases and parasites than indoor cats
- outdoor cats are more likely to suffer injury from cars, attack from other animals domestic and wild than indoor cats

## From the "Oval Office"

Dear Friends,

It has been a long hot summer and many rehabilitators have seen higher than usual admissions...and a squirrel season that seems to never have stopped! As the end of "baby season" draws near, and summer education programs give way to school visits, it's time to turn our attention back to establishing our fledgling organization as a vital resource for our wildlife community.

We are in the planning stages for our fall meeting sometime in early November, with the primary focus to begin planning a one day symposium in late 2007. We welcome any suggestions for topics of interest. In the meantime, there are several conferences scheduled in our general vicinity, covering a variety of topics in wildlife care, natural history, education programming as well as administrative and regulatory sessions.

- outdoor cats can be stolen or harassed by HUMANS
- recommend spaying or neutering cats; spayed and neutered cats do not roam as far and they do not contribute to the already overpopulated cat population

If the above facts don't convince them, suggest putting bells on their cat's collar. Bells? Many clever felines can learn to move without causing a single bell to sound, but two bells seem to foil them. The jingle of the bells will at least warn unsuspecting animals to a cat's presence.

For more information, please see <http://www.abcbirds.org> click on Cats Indoors. This is an excellent source of information regarding cats and wildlife. There are many suggestions for reducing cat predation as well as fact sheets, posters and downloadable pamphlets.

Recent regulatory and permit changes have caused concern in the rehabilitation community, especially in the eastern one-third of the state. The Wildlife Rehabilitation Code of Ethics requires us to abide by local, state, and federal laws (whether we agree with them in whole, in part, or not at all). My dream for our organization is that as we establish ourselves as professionals we will become a valuable resource that can provide natural history and conservation information as well as address public health and educational concerns as part of the process BEFORE regulatory changes are made. I ask for your individual support and commitment to continue to act in a professional and responsible manner as we move forward in developing our organization and its programs and services.

I hope to see you all at our fall meeting.

**LouAnn Partington**

## Conferences

TN Environmental Educators Association  
9/22-24 Montgomery Bell State Park  
[www.teea.info](http://www.teea.info)

IL Wildlife Rehabilitators Association  
10/14 Peoria, IL  
[www.ilwra.org](http://www.ilwra.org)

IWRC International Symposium  
1/18-22/07 Dallas, TX  
[www.iwrc-online.org](http://www.iwrc-online.org)

FL Wildlife Rehabilitators Association  
9/28-30 Brookville, FL  
[www.fwra.org](http://www.fwra.org)

SC Rehabilitators Association  
11/4-5 Columbia, SC  
[www.carolinawildlife.org](http://www.carolinawildlife.org)

NWRA 25th Annual Symposium  
3/13-17/07 Chicago, IL  
[www.nwrawildlife.org](http://www.nwrawildlife.org)

OH Wildlife Rehabilitators Association  
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