

## Maine Rabies Work Group Meeting

Tuesday, July 16, 2019

1:30pm – 3:00pm

Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation & Forestry  
Deering Building, Room 306

### Meeting Minutes

In Attendance: Kris Barboza, Stephen Combes, Robin Dyer, Rachael Fiske, Katie Hansberry (phone), Eris Kilham, Jesse Morris, Haris Sohail

#### Agency Updates:

##### Maine Health and Environmental Testing Laboratory

- 38 positive samples in 2019 (254 samples tested), all wildlife, see handout
- HETL is fully staffed (Sarah Holland is returning to lab)
- HETL is providing 2018 Oxford County data to Federal CDC due to Coos County, NH outbreak

##### Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention

- Updated educational materials (see handout) – poster, brochure, Animal Rabies Surveillance factsheet (new)
- Overview of Rabies PEP in Maine (ppt)
- Also working on an algorithm for bat exposures that will be a publicly accessible website that provides information and guidance on bat exposures and next steps/contacts. No other state has done something like this yet.
- Rabies storyboard developed for social media (Facebook and YouTube), will run for a month, metrics may show who is looking, clicking, watching, etc. and identify areas for education, outreach, etc.
- Summer camp packet distributed to camps included rabies information (including bat info)
- Press release for USDA-WS ORV bait drops ready to go out - USDA-WS requests that PR go out sooner rather than later due to 2 new positive cases in Bath/Brunswick (2018 bait drop PR coincided with several Brunswick cases and was confusing for mid-coast residents, created a lot of excitement, etc.)
- FYI – during a suspect case investigation it was determined that a buried, deceased animal can be exhumed and PCR tested up to 15 days post-burial
- Have had several cases involving licensed wildlife rehabilitators and/or certified volunteers – would like to know about contacts for information on licensing (IF&W), education and outreach. Kris Barboza (IF&W) recommends speaking to biologist (provides education and determines what licensing is received), Shevenell Webb is a biologist on RWG, will contact. Katie Hansberry (ME Fed Humane Societies) is on wildlife rehabilitator steering committee and will bring this issue up at next meeting (soon). Note: after meeting Rachael provided contact information for Katie and Shevenell to Haris.

Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife

- Wardens utilizing Mail-A-Bat program, looking for vet clinic downeast to expand area, Warden Dan Scott is talking to vet clinics that are in the desired area
- Mail-A-Bat discussion (from discussion items): thoughts about asking veterinary emergency clinics to join program (Portland, Scarborough, Lewiston, Waldoboro, Brewer) in addition to a general practice in the Ellsworth area
  - Stephen asked Eris if she knew how many submissions there have been; answer: not yet but it's now being indicated on the submission form so will know more this fall
  - So far, all samples have been submitted in acceptable condition
- Discussed IF&W involvement with recent wolf hybrid case where a vet tech was potentially exposed

#### Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation & Forestry

- No specific Animal Health updates that haven't already been mentioned
- Animal Welfare Program is changing the basic ACO training to an initial online training program in order to shorten the in-person basic training course. All online training must be completed before the in-person training. Rabies response and control has an online module and will also have a slot for a presentation during the in-person training.

#### USDA APHIS Wildlife Services

- Enhanced Rabies Surveillance (map provided) – 9 positive samples, including 1 that was PCR positive (completely desiccated carcass, hide and bones only, lab scraped the inside of the skull and ran PRC → positive), 3 positives within the ORV zone. Starting to work on surveillance in Western ME due to NH cases
- ORV bait drops, week of August 3<sup>rd</sup>, same plan/zone as 2018, will distribute 351,000 baits

#### Maine Animal Control Association

- No representative attending but new representative to RWG is Sue Milligan, ACO for Rumford

#### Maine Federation of Humane Societies

- No RWG-specific updates, but Katie will connect with Haris re: Wildlife Rehabilitator Steering Committee as a way of outreach to rehabber community

#### Discussion Item:

##### Real-time alert system for rabies cases

Background – some states and/or communities are utilizing a “real-time” alert system when positive cases are identified in the state/community so that veterinarians, ACOs, wardens, etc. receive up-to-date information about potential risks in their area. Is this something that could be initiated in Maine?

Rachael – one idea that would be effective but simple to manage and relatively low-tech would be to utilize the already existing data posted on the HETL website and send out as updated via a gov.delivery email. We can do a bit of outreach to professionals that deal with rabies-vector species and give them the option of signing up for the gov.delivery messaging.

Eris – website not always updated regularly but will likely improve now that lab is fully staffed. Will check with IT person that updates website to see if any issues.

Haris – What about using the Maine Tracking Network to provide actual Real-Time data?

Lyme, anaplasma and babesia cases are part of this and you can use the data to create all sorts of maps, charts, etc. Thinks it's funded as part of a grant but will check anyway.

**Action Items:**

- Connect re: outreach to wildlife rehabilitators – Katie, Shevenell, Haris
- Mail-A-Bat expansion – Dan Scott (IF&W) to focus on Downeast; Rachael, Menolly(?) to reach out to emergency clinics
- ORV Press Release to go out – ME CDC
- Real-Time Alert system – Haris, Rachael to pursue options

Next Meeting: October 15, 2019, 1:30-3:00