



MEMORANDUM

TO: Local Health Departments, Illinois Department of Agriculture Bureau of Animal Health and Welfare, Illinois Department of Natural Resources

FROM: Communicable Disease Control Section

DATE: March 18, 2025

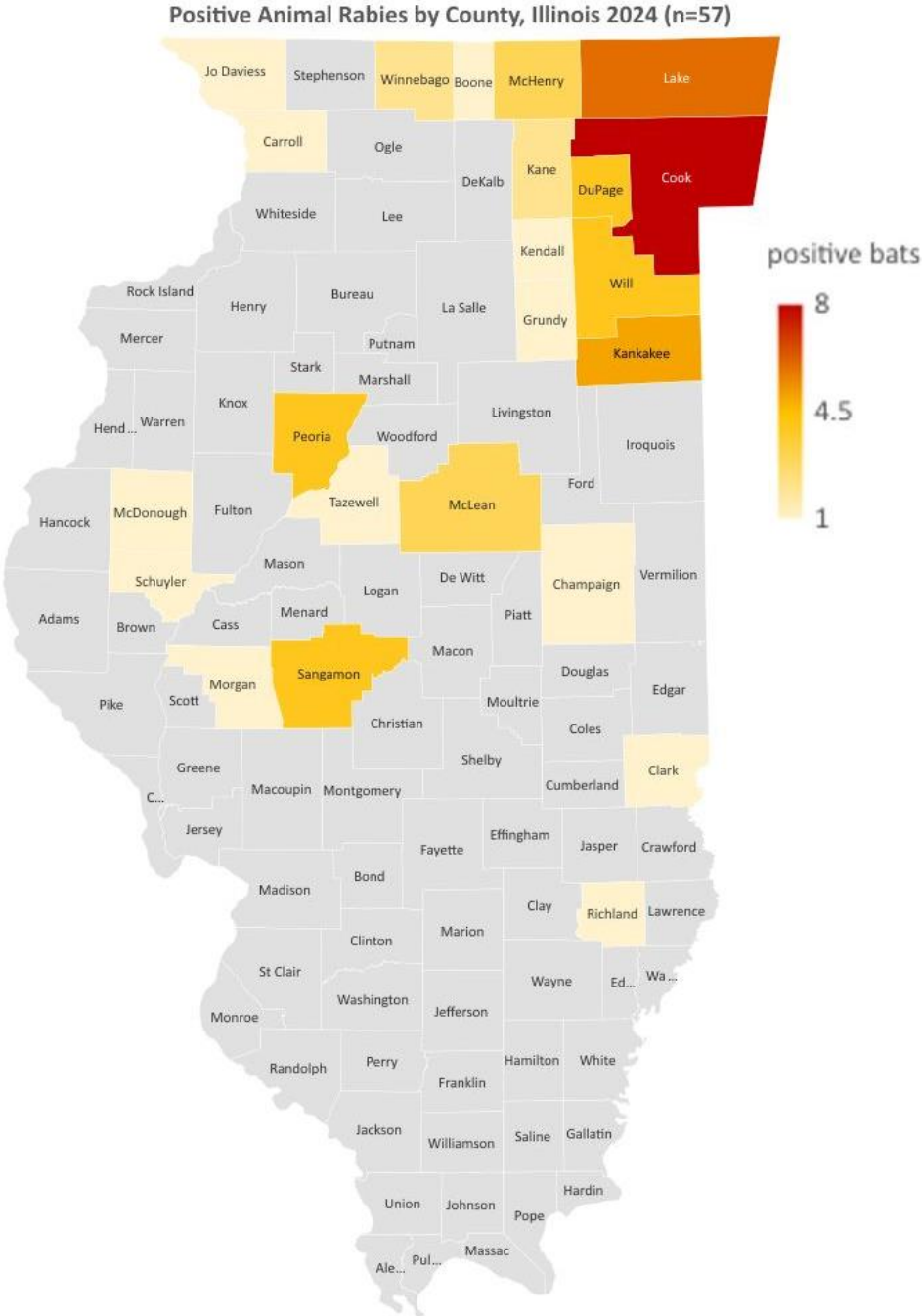
SUBJECT: **Animal Rabies Surveillance for 2024**

In 2024, a total of 3,399 Illinois animals were submitted for rabies testing to the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) and University of Illinois veterinary diagnostic laboratories. There were 40 animal brains not suitable for testing or not tested. Of the 3,359 animals tested, 57 were fluorescent antibody-positive for rabies. All rabid animals were bats. Animals testing positive for rabies from 2013 to 2024 are listed in Table 1. In 2024, the most frequently tested animals were bats (1,544), dogs (1,080), cats (481), raccoons (118), skunks (50) and squirrels (22). No dogs, horses, skunks or raccoons tested positive between 2013 and 2024. However, there are a very limited number of skunks and raccoons that are tested each year. Therefore, these species are still considered to be high risk rabies species in Illinois. Geographic location of bats testing positive for rabies is shown in Figure 1.

Table 1. Animal species that tested positive for rabies in Illinois, 2013-2024

Species	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Bat	56	40	97	62	58	85	54	38	40	61	83	57
Cattle	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Cat	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Fox	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Skunk	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	56	40	97	63	58	85	54	38	40	61	83	57

Figure 1.



BATS

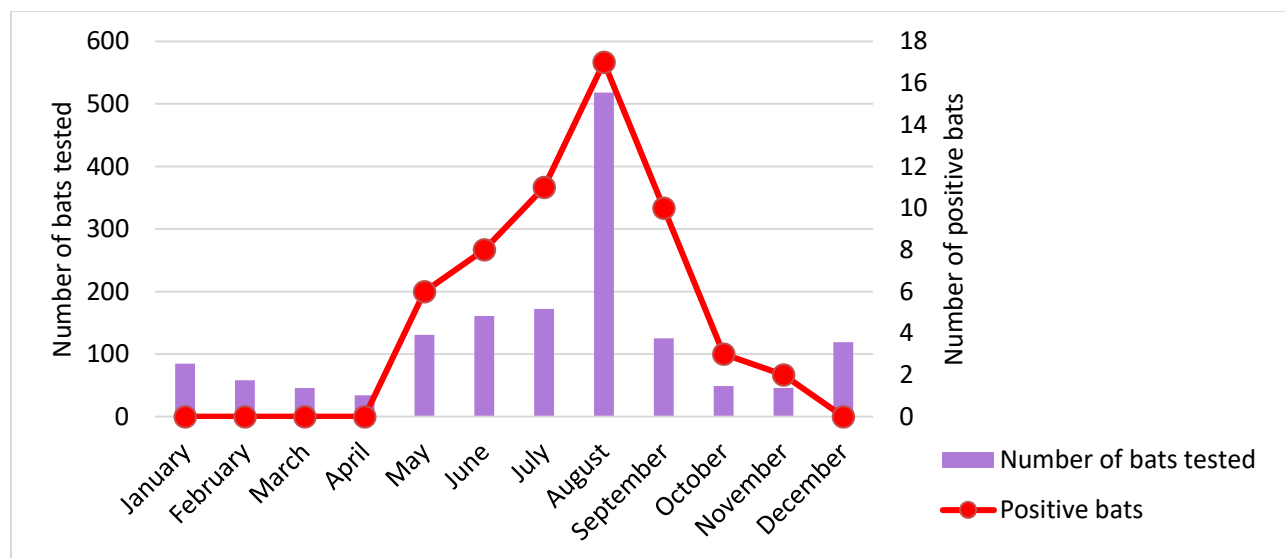
In 2024, bats were the only species identified with rabies in Illinois. In this year, 1,544 bats were tested for rabies. Of those tested, 1,487 were determined negative for the virus, 0 were inconclusive, and there were 57 bats confirmed positive. An additional 26 bats were submitted for testing, but specimens were unsatisfactory or untested. The percent of bats tested which were positive for rabies in 2024 was 3.7 percent (See Table 2).

Table 2. Rabies test results for bat species in Illinois, 2024

Negative	Positive	Total Tested	% Positive
1,487	57	1,544	3.7

The majority of testing occurred in August when bats are very active and likely to come in contact with humans or pets (See Figure 2).

Figure 2. Number of all bats and positive bats tested in Illinois by month for 2024 (left y axis=number of bats tested; right y axis=positive bats)



SKUNKS AND OTHER TERRESTRIAL MAMMALS

In 2024, no skunks tested positive for rabies. Of the 3,359 animals tested, only 50 (1.5%) were skunks. An additional one skunk was submitted for testing, but specimen was unsatisfactory and not tested. The following 11 counties submitted skunks for rabies testing: Cook (19), DuPage (7), Effingham (1), Henry (1), Lake (12), McHenry (2), McLean (3), St. Clair (1), Whiteside (1), Will (3) and Woodford (1).

Please share this memorandum with your veterinary and animal control partners. We appreciate all the rabies control and prevention efforts by local animal control, veterinarians and public health professionals.