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Rabies

What is rabies?

- Rabies is an infections viral disease that affects the nervous system.
- It is transmitted by a bite from a rabid animal.

Rabies can be fatal to humans and animals

- If you are bitten by any animal, even a household pet, and especially if the bite is from a wild animal like a bat, it is important to consult with your health care provider.
- According to the law, dogs, cats, and ferrets that bite humans should be quarantines for 10 days.
- If any other animal bites a human, euthanasia and rabies testing of the animal is recommended.

Why it's important to vaccinate cats

- Nationally, twice as many cats as dogs are reported to have rabies each year. This is why it's important to vaccinate your cats for rabies.
- Cats are natural predators and may be attracted to bats, which could be rabid. Cats come into contact with bats far more often that other pets and, if not vaccinated, may have to be euthanized after such contact.

Horses should be vaccinated too

- While the incidence of rabies in horses is low, the disease is invariably fatal. Because of this, and the risk to public health, the American Association of Equine Practitioners recommends **annual rabies vaccinations** for horses. Consult with your veterinarian about vaccination protocols for your horse.

DO NOT pick up or touch bats

- Bats play an important role in the ecosystem, especially in controlling insects at night. They are important insect predators; they often eat mosquitoes and can catch over 1,000 tiny insects an hour. Bats emerge from hibernation in early spring and remain active until late fall; they are most active in warm weather.
- Most often, humans are exposed to rabies by picking up a seemingly injured bat. If you find a bat during daylight hours, it is most likely unhealthy and should be avoided.
- Anyone bitten by a bat should be vaccinated for rabies immediately if the bat is not available for testing. Cats increase the risk by playing with bats and taking them into homes.

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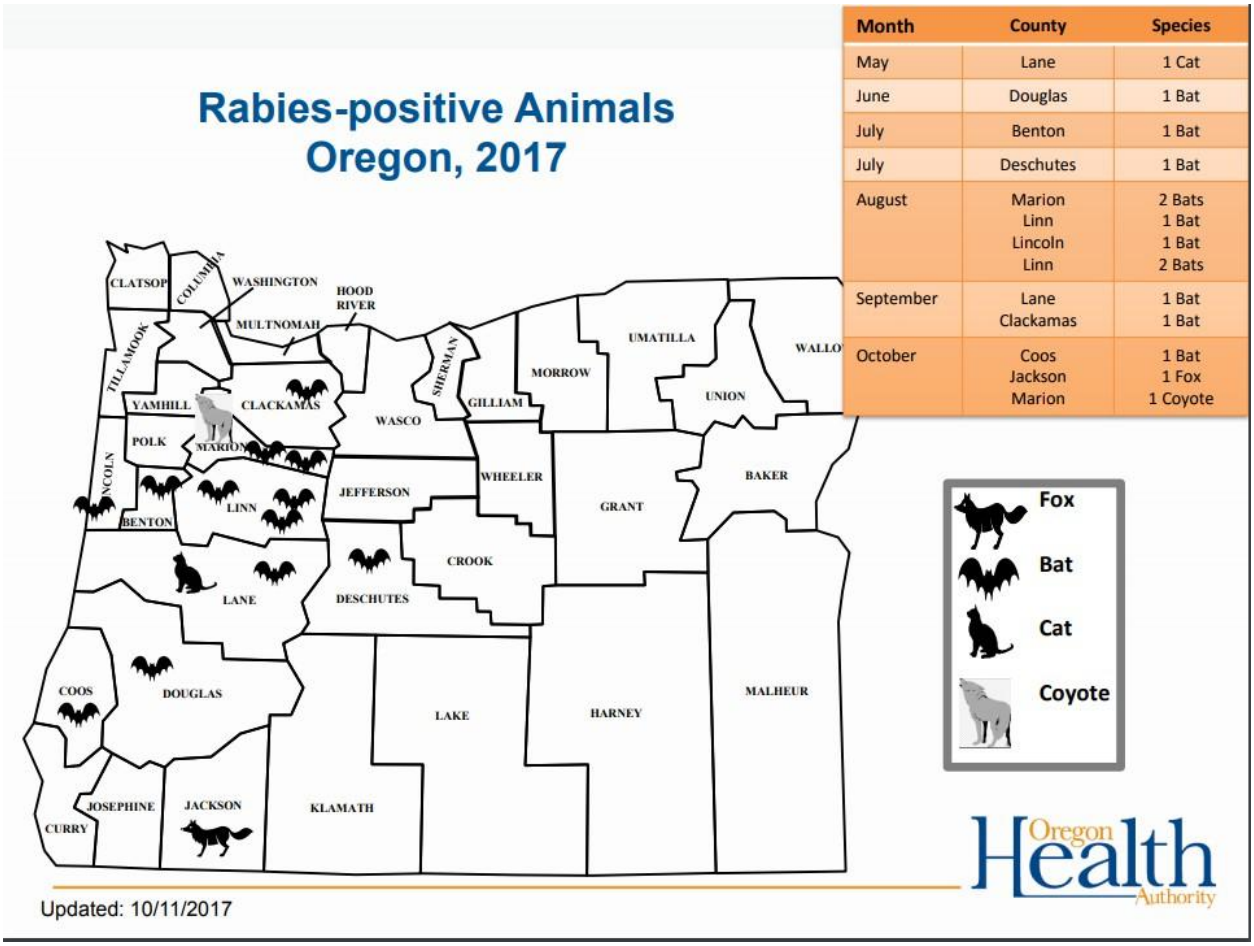
- Every year about 10% of the bats tested for rabies test positive for the disease. Bats are tested for rabies only when a person or a pet has had physical contact with them.

Oregon State law and County law requires rabies vaccination for pets

- Vaccinating pets (dogs, cats, and ferrets) against rabies protects them and provides a "buffer zone" between humans and rabid wild animals.
- Oregon law requires all dogs to be vaccinated against rabies.
- In addition, Multnomah County require all cats to be vaccinated for rabies.
- Oregon law requires unvaccinated pets that may have been in contact with rabid animals (such as bats) to be quarantines for six months or euthanized.