

Ministry of Natural Resources

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In 2025, the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) will once again be conducting Oral Rabies Vaccine (ORV) bait distribution and trap-vaccinate-release (TVR) programs in Ontario to control rabies in terrestrial wildlife. Baiting and TVR operations will begin June 16 and continue until the end of October.

Please find attached:

- 1) Map of planned baiting area for 2025
- 2) Rabies Vaccine Bait Information Sheet
- 3) Notification Letter for 2025

Per the attached map, rabies vaccine bait distribution will be conducted in rural areas with MNR aircraft and by hand in urban areas by MNR wildlife technicians. These are the details of rabies control activities in 2025 (dates are subject to change depending on weather conditions):

- Grey shaded areas will be completed with a combination of Twin Otter airplane and Eurocopter EC130 helicopter. Twin Otter flights will occur mid-late August, with Eurocopter EC130 flights occurring late August.
- Urban hand baiting, will occur in the orange and brown shaded areas starting June 23 and continue through to the end of October.
- Live trapping and vaccinating of wildlife (trap-vaccinate-release) will occur the St. Catharines in the orange shaded area starting June 23 and will continue through to the end of October.
- Preventative baiting of the purple shaded area in eastern Ontario will take place mid August by Twin Otter airplane and will take one day to complete and hand baiting in the dark purple shaded area of the city of Cornwall will be completed in early August.

In addition to the activities mentioned above, MNR may conduct localized rapid response baiting and trap-vaccinate-release measures, which would take place in the event of a raccoon or fox strain rabies case outside of the planned baiting area.

The ministry is committed to the research, surveillance, control and elimination of the outbreak of rabies in southwestern Ontario to prevent the disease from spreading. Since the start of the rabies outbreak in 2015, the first of its kind in over a decade, MNR has taken quick action to protect communities, distributing over 9 million vaccine baits by air and ground. Rabies cases have decreased by 98% since 2016.

In keeping with current World Health Organization guidelines, the 2025 rabies control zone has been reduced as some areas have had no reported cases in over two years. The control zone encompasses an area within approximately 50 km of positive cases that are less than two years old (positive cases since July 1, 2023).

Any warm-blooded mammal can contract rabies. If a human contracts rabies and does not receive treatment, the disease is fatal.

The khaki-green coloured bait being distributed by hand and by aircraft is made of wax-fat with an attractant flavour (vanilla-sugar). A label with a toll-free telephone number (1-888-574-6656) and the message "Do not eat" is located on the exterior of the bait, and a plastic package containing the liquid rabies vaccine is embedded in the centre. If found, the bait should not be touched, but left for raccoons, skunks and foxes to consume. (See attached bait identification hand out for detailed description.)

Ontario's rabies vaccine baits have been tested to ensure they are safe for wildlife, people, and pets. However, eating a vaccine bait does not replace the regular rabies vaccination provided by a veterinarian for pets. If a pet has eaten a bait and the owner is concerned, they should contact their vet as a precaution.

Ontario's rabies control program is a joint effort that receives important input and contributions from a variety of partners across the province. Partnerships with provincial ministries, federal agencies, regional health units, municipalities, wildlife rehabilitators, licensed trappers, wildlife control agents and Indigenous communities are all key to the continued success of Ontario's rabies control program.

For further information about rabies in Ontario, please visit [Ontario.ca/rabies](https://ontario.ca/rabies) or contact the ministry's wildlife health information line at 1-888-574-6656.

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