

Rabies II



Facts Not Fiction

by Bob Weisdack

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Dedication

This booklet is dedicated to my family who so diligently humored me during the wee hours of the morning. (I love you!)

I would also like to include two dear friends who wish to remain anonymous. You have proven to me that all should not be judged because of a few. The Trappers Association should be proud of both. (God be with you always!)

General Information

1. WHY IS THERE A NEED TO EDUCATE THE PUBLIC, ESPECIALLY THE YOUNG, ABOUT WILDLIFE DISEASES? Medical statistics show that the majority of post-exposure treatment for wildlife diseases is given to individuals between 5-18 years of age! Generally, when an exposure takes place in this age range, it is most likely it will be a case of multiple exposures. This is due to society's lackadaisical approach to control "domestic pets" and the neglect to educate young children about such diseases, which may affect them!!

5. WHAT WILL KILL THE RABIES VIRUS? High concentrations of strong acids, bases, ultraviolet irradiation and high temperatures. These chemicals (acids, bases) have demonstrated their ability to kill the virus. Ultraviolet irradiation (sunlight) will kill the virus, but remember the virus's viability may be extended due to other factors. High temperatures have shown to render the virus harmless. The higher the temperature the faster the virus will die! Never utilize any of these facts as a substitute for medical treatment!!

7. WHAT ARE PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENTS DOING TO PROTECT THE GENERAL PUBLIC? These agencies are doing all they possibly can. Multi-media techniques are employed to alert residents of potential dangers. Announcements and bulletins are disseminated by way of TV, radio, and newspapers. This approach assures that individuals are well informed, as to what to do in the case of an emergency.

8. IF APPROACHED BY A SUSPICIOUS ACTING ANIMAL, WHAT SHOULD YOU DO? Do not scream! Any loud noise may cause the animal to attack! Do not run unless you are at a safe distance. Move away slowly! Climb the nearest tree, and then call for help. Warn all persons attempting to help of the fact! If you are exposed (bitten) remember the kind, type, and color or any other outstanding features which may aid in identifying the suspect animal. Never attempt to touch or play with a stray dog, cat or any wildlife!

9. ARE THERE CERTAIN SPECIES OF WILDLIFE, WHICH EXHIBIT A NATURAL HISTORY OF RABIES? Yes! Research suggests that bats, weasel, civet, mongoose, and skunk families have been documented as being infected even when rabies was not found in other regional species!

11. IS RABIES AND DISTEMPER SIMILAR? Yes! Both produce an encephalitis type reaction (inflammation of the brain), which is fatal! Both display similar behavioral characteristics in animals: incoherence, wandering about aimlessly, paralysis, etc. It has been shown that distemper is not transmittable to man.

12. WHAT OTHER EPIZOOTIC DISEASES EXIST IN THE WILDLIFE DOMAIN THAT CAN BE HIGHLY TRANSMITTABLE TO MAN? Tularemia, Leptospirosis, raccoon roundworm and others.

13. IF A FIREARM IS NECESSARY IN DISPATCHING A SUSPECT ANIMAL, WHERE IS THE BEST LOCATION TO AIM? Aim for the area directly behind the head, but between the shoulders, or the heart area—never in the brain region

15. SHOULD THE SUSPECT ANIMAL BE BURIED IN THE PLASTIC BAG? No! Bury separately! If buried in the bag, the period of decomposition will take longer. The bag could be cremated if done in an enclosed incinerator.

16. SHOULD ANY WILD ANIMAL BE TAKEN HOME ALIVE WHICH HAS BEEN CAPTURED IN AN OUTBREAK AREA? No! Under no circumstances should this action be condoned! You could be asking for trouble!

17. SHOULD A PERSON ATTEMPT TO MAKE A PET OF ANY ANIMAL TAKEN FROM THE WILD? No! The animal may be carrying an undetectable (dormant) case of rabies. The only way I would consider having a wild animal, as a pet is that it would have to be pen-raised for several generations.

18. SHOULD YOU EVER PICKUP A ROAD KILLED ANIMAL? No! These animals should never be touched, plus in most states this action is against the law!!

19. SHOULD LIVESTOCK IN OUTBREAK AREAS BE INNOCULATED? Yes! This is highly suggested! Valuable prize animals may be lost if precautionary measures are not sought. Ask your vet about these vaccines!

21. WHY DO RABID ANIMALS FEAR WATER? During the paralytic stage, the animal cannot swallow or has severe difficulty in doing so; therefore, the sight of water and the inability to drink causes the animal to shy away

25. SHOULD HUNTERS AND TRAPPERS BE ENCOURAGED TO DECREASE HERD DENSITIES, ESPECIALLY IN OUTBREAK AREAS? Yes! High herd densities are associated with many wildlife diseases therefore, keeping these herd densities in balance aid in reducing the chance of a more severe outbreak from happening! This has been demonstrated in epidemiological studies. This is known as low herd density obstacles!

30. WHERE DID ALL THIS INFORMATION COME FROM? All of this information was compiled from studies done in public health, epidemiology, microbiology, pathology, virology and other related scientific research!

31. HOW MANY STRAINS OF RABIES ARE THERE? Research indicates that there are 121 strains of virus, which are related to rabies; however, there are 10 true rabies strains.

32. IS IT OF URGENT IMPORTANCE TO DIAGNOSE RABIES IN HUMANS RIGHT AWAY? Yes! Rabies displays signs, which are similar to that of other viral disorders, possibly causing a misdiagnosis, which could result in death! If a sportsman/woman, inform physician of this possibility.

33. HOW DOES RABIES TRAVEL THROUGHOUT THE BODY? Rabies is a neurogenic virus and travels by way of the nervous system to the brain, not by blood!

35. CAN RABIES BE FOUND IN BLOOD? Research indicates that rabies has not been found in blood or blood-forming organs. However, I would still highly suggest that precautionary measures be used when coming in contact with this agent!

43. DOES MEDICAL INSURANCE COVER THE COST FOR HUMAN POST-EXPOSURE TREATMENT? In most cases, the answer is no! Check with your insurance agent if interested.

44. IS RABIES IN THE DOMESTIC ANIMAL POPULATION A THREAT? Yes! I would consider domestic rabies to be a time bomb just waiting to go off, unless a wholehearted effort is made to educate everyone to such facts and have all pets properly immunized.

45. ARE FREE ROAMING DOGS AND CATS A THREAT TO THE PUBLIC' S HEALTH? Yes! It appears that allowing a cat to roam freely about is more socially acceptable than for a dog. But allowing any domestic pet to wander will enhance the probability of an encounter with a diseased animal, thus enabling the disease to be carried home exposing both humans and other domestic animals! These free-roaming pets have significantly contributed to the fact that thousands of individuals have had to receive unnecessary post-exposure treatment! It is of paramount importance that this action be halted immediately!!

46. IS THE CAT A MAJOR CONTRIBUTOR IN THE SPREAD OF DOMESTIC RABIES? Yes! The number of documented rabid cats has surpassed that viewed in dogs since 1981. Over the past 3 years, the United States has an average of 4 + cases of rabid cats per state! I would consider this to be extremely high!

47. HOW OLD SHOULD A DOG OR CAT BE BEFORE IT RECEIVES A RABIES IMMUNIZATION SHOT? The earliest age suggested is 3 months old! Contact your vet.

50. IS IT NECESSARY TO IMMUNIZE ALL DOGS AND CATS AGAINST RABIES? Yes! This procedure not only proves you care about your pet, but it would also minimize any possible rabies threat from a domestic animal! The cost caused by one rabid dog in California was over \$105,000. This could happen in any city!!

52. DO "NORMAL" DOGS BITE CHILDREN EVEN IF UNPROVOKED? Yes! Recent research indicates that dogs send thousands of children to emergency rooms yearly! These biting episodes have generally taken place even when there was no abusive treatment!

55. WHAT CONTROL METHODS ARE UTILIZED TO CONTROL DOMESTIC RABIES, AND DO THEY WORK? (1) Have all pets properly immunized. (2) Obey the leash law. (3) Capture all stray dogs and cats. Is It effective? If everyone followed these 3 simple rules it would prove to be very effective! What is so disturbing is that almost every case of domestic rabies can be prevented!

56. WHY IS DOMESTIC RABIES SUCH A THREAT? This is because we live in such close proximity with our domestic pets, and assume that they will never harm us! Never allow a dog or cat to lick your mouth or any open wound! If scratched or bitten by any animal, inform an adult immediately!

63. IS RABIES A THREAT AMONG RABBITS? Statistics have shown that the probability of a rabbit acquiring the disease is low, however cases have been documented! Small game hunters should be more aware of tularemia, which is highly prevalent among rabbits! Use rubber gloves!

64. SHOULD BIG GAME HUNTERS KNOW ABOUT RABIES? Yes! Recently numerous cases of rabid deer have been documented! If the animal shows signs of disease, contact game commission officers immediately! Do not shoot the animal! Use rubber gloves when field dressing! Remember brain tissue may be contaminated for an undetermined amount of time!!! Use all precautionary measures at all times!

66. WHEN OBSERVING OR EXAMINING A DISPATCHED SUSPECT ANIMAL, WHAT SHOULD ONE LOOK FOR? If the animal has any peculiar physical features such as; fur missing from around the mouth region, front or hindquarters, malnutrition, possible excessive saliva dripping from the mouth. If so, bury immediately! If none of these signs are observable, proceed with care, using precautionary measures!

71. WHAT IS A GOOD PRACTICE FOR TAXIDERMISTS TO FOLLOW? Get pre-exposure shots! When doing large horned animal heads do so in a well-ventilated area! Do not touch any of the brain tissue! As soon as the horns are removed, hang for 36 hours, dispose of remains in the suggested manner and treat tools immediately!!

72. WHY DOES IT APPEAR THAT RACCOONS, SKUNKS, AND GREY FOX ARE AFFECTED MORE SO THAN RED FOX? These animals tend to cluster in dens or confined areas, thus promoting air-borne and bite transmission. Red fox are loners and tend to occupy more open areas, thus reducing the probability of transmission by these methods.

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