



[nyc.gov/health](http://nyc.gov/health)

**NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND  
MENTAL HYGIENE**

Thomas R. Frieden, MD, MPH  
*Commissioner*

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
Friday, September 23, 2005**

**(212) 788-5290; (212) 788-3058 (after hours)**

**RABID RACCOON FOUND IN QUEENS, NEAR NASSAU COUNTY BORDER**

*Health Department Reminds New Yorkers to Avoid Wild Animals and Vaccinate Pets Against Rabies;  
Additional Raccoon Rabies Vaccine Bait to be Placed in Affected Area of Queens*

**NEW YORK CITY – September 23, 2005** – A rabid raccoon captured in the Little Neck section of Queens on September 15 has tested positive for rabies. This is the first rabid raccoon identified in Queens since 2001, and the fourth rabid animal found in Queens since raccoon rabies was identified in New York City in 1992, the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) announced today. As a precautionary measure, DOHMH reminded New Yorkers to avoid contact with raccoons, skunks, bats, stray dogs and cats as well as other wild animals that can carry rabies. There were no reported bites or exposures to the Queens raccoon.

Additionally, since August 2004 – when raccoon rabies was discovered in Nassau County – a total of 26 rabid raccoons have tested positive for rabies in Nassau County, some were found less than one mile from the Queens border. This indicates rabies may possibly be spreading among raccoons from Nassau County into Queens. In response to the growing number of rabid raccoons in the area, the Nassau County Health Department, DOHMH, the Suffolk County Department of Health Services, the New York State Department of Health, and the USDA Wildlife Services have distributed oral rabies vaccine (ORV) in Nassau County, a small residential area of Queens, and an area of the Nassau/Suffolk border.

The raccoon announced today was captured outside of the ORV baited area, which means other raccoons in the area are not immunized and could potentially spread rabies to each other, to humans or to other animals. As a result, raccoon ORV baiting will be conducted in Queens on September 27 - 30. Bait will be distributed by the New York State Health Department primarily by hand, with park areas baited by helicopter. **The borders for the baiting area, connected clockwise, are: the Nassau County/Queens County borderline; Jamaica Avenue; 212<sup>th</sup> Street; the Clearview Expressway; and Little Bay and Little Neck Bay (also known as Long Island Sound).** See below for more information on ORV and precautions.

New Yorkers are reminded to avoid animals acting aggressively, stumbling or acting disoriented, or wild animals acting unusually tame and report such animals by calling **311** or the local police precinct. DOHMH is also reaching out to area veterinarians to ask them to report any suspected cases of rabies to the health department and to remind their clients to vaccinate their pets against rabies.

**Information about Raccoon Oral Rabies Vaccine**

Raccoons are attracted by the brown, fish-scented bait, which conceals a small packet of liquid vaccine about one square inch in size. When raccoons consume the bait, they become “immunized” and can no longer pass on rabies infection. Parents and caregivers in the area should supervise children’s outdoor activities during and up to one week following bait distribution; pets should be kept on leashes for a week after the baiting.

(more)

While the vaccine is not harmful to pets, it may cause vomiting if they consume it. The bait is labeled “**Rabies Vaccine Live Vaccinia Vector. Do Not Disturb, Merial, Inc Us Vet Lic. No. 298 1-877-722-6725.**” Photos of the bait can be found at <http://www.health.state.ny.us/nysdoh/zoonoses/vaccpict.htm>. Other items to note about the bait:

- If you make bare-skin contact with the bait, or if you have tried to remove a bait from a pet's mouth and are bitten in the process the New York City Poison Control Center at **(212) POISONS (764-7667)**. Seek immediate medical attention if the liquid is ingested.
- It is not possible to get rabies from the vaccine, but it does contain a weakened form of another virus that can cause skin infections in rare circumstances.
- Residents who find unopened bait on their property where pets or children are more likely to encounter it can toss it under trees or bushes. Anyone who needs to touch the bait should wear gloves or use a plastic bag.
- If you suspect your pet consumed the bait, do not try to remove it from your pet’s mouth. The baits are not harmful to dogs or cats, but pets may vomit if they eat a large number of them.
- Raccoons or other wild animals that appear sick or aggressive should be reported to **311**.

### **Information about Rabies**

Rabies is most often transmitted through the bite or scratch of an infected animal or when saliva of the infected animal comes into contact with an open wound or mucous membrane. Simple contact with a wild animal will not result in rabies. To protect yourself:

- If bitten or scratched by a wild animal, contact a medical provider or DOHMH at 212-788-9830 during business hours or the Poison Control Center at 212-POISONS (212-764-7667) during non-business hours. If possible, try to keep track of the animal's location to facilitate possible pick-up for rabies testing.
- If bitten by a domestic animal (e.g., dog, cat) contact a medical provider or the DOHMH Animal Bites Unit at **212-676-2483** immediately. Try to get the owner and animal's information so that the animal may be monitored for signs of rabies.
- If you are unsure whether you've come into contact with a bat (e.g., if you’ve been sleeping and wake to find the bat in your room), contact a medical provider or the DOHMH. Do not release the bat. Call 311 to arrange to have the bat tested.

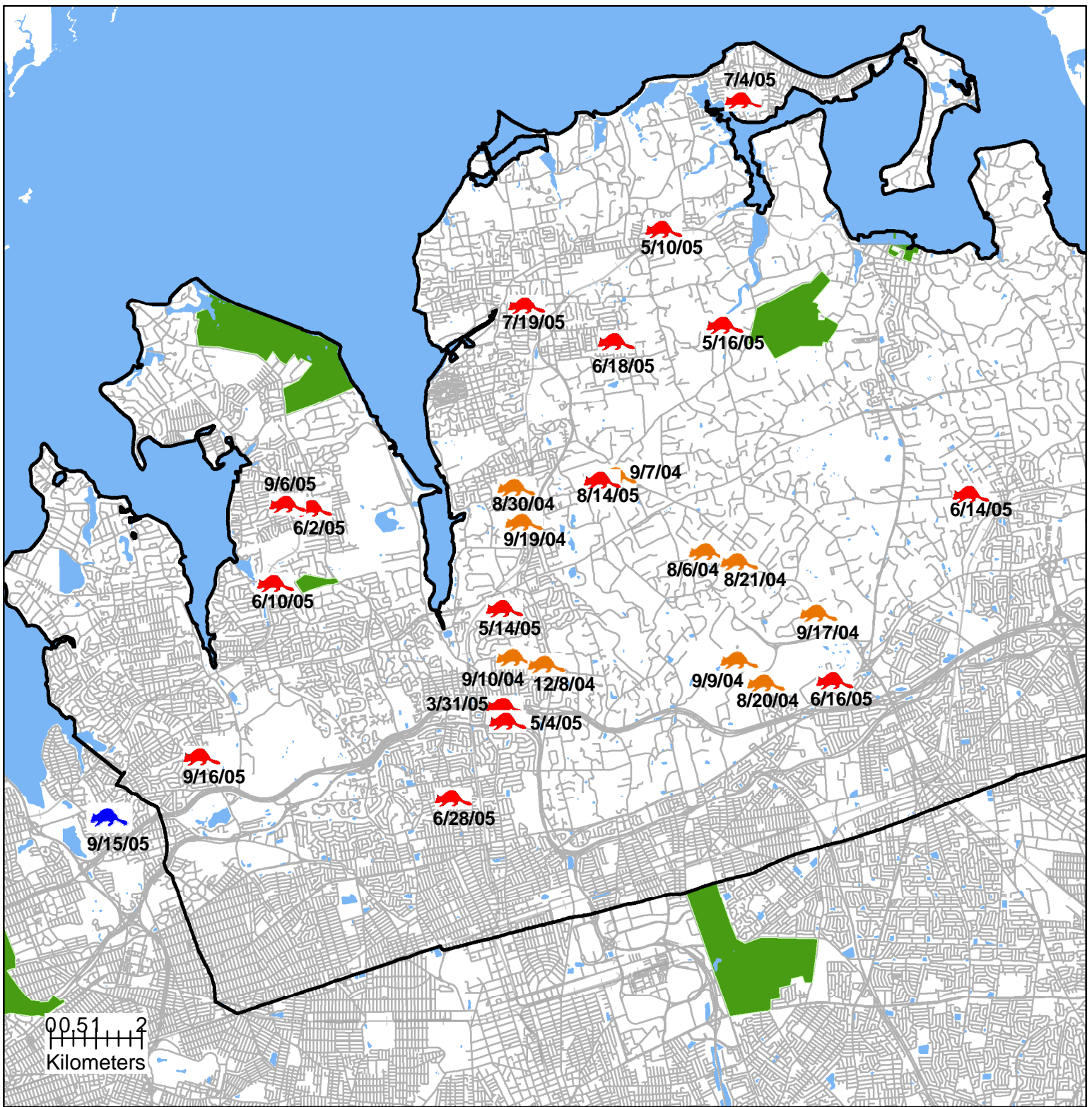
New Yorkers are also reminded to license their pets and vaccinate them against rabies. Initial rabies vaccinations for dogs and cats are valid for one year, and re-vaccinations are valid for one or three years, depending on the type of vaccine. If your pet has been in contact with an animal that might be rabid, contact your veterinarian, 212-676-2483 (during business hours) or 212-POISONS (during non-business hours). To apply for a dog license, visit [nyc.gov/health](http://nyc.gov/health) or call **311** to request an application.

Rabies is a viral infection that affects the nervous system. If preventive treatment is necessary – and is obtained promptly following exposure to a rabid animal – most cases of rabies can be prevented. Treatment requires prompt washing of the bite site with soap and copious amounts of water, followed by the administration of rabies immune globulin (dosage depending on weight) and five doses of rabies vaccine administered into the arm muscle over the course of 28 days following an exposure. Untreated rabies infection is almost always fatal.

###

#102

**Contact:** (212) 788-5290; (212) 788-3058 (After Hours)  
Sandra Mullin ([smullin@health.nyc.gov](mailto:smullin@health.nyc.gov))  
Eric Riley ([eriley1@health.nyc.gov](mailto:eriley1@health.nyc.gov))



- Streets & Highways
- Park or Forest
- Water Bodies/Wetlands
- +— Railroads
- Bait Area Fall 2005
- 🦝 2004 Positive Raccoons - Nassau (10)
- 🦝 2005 Positive Raccoons - Nassau (16)
- 🦝 2005 Positive Raccoon - Queens

Updated 9/20/05

