

DOC'S DESK

The big news this month, so far, has been the passage of Senate Bill 360 and its signing by the governor. This bill makes the use of carbon monoxide illegal for euthanizing dogs and cats in Texas. Please be sure to read the article elsewhere in this newsletter for more details. In other news, 2013 has thus far been extremely kind to us in HSR 1 from a zoonoses perspective, with no major zoonotic issues being encountered through the middle of May.

On the rabies front, a bit of comparison is in order. By May 13, 2011 HSR 1 had accumulated 33 animal rabies cases while the state had confirmed 423. By May 13, 2012, HSR 1 reported 9 cases and the statewide total was 271. Those were both dramatic decreases in rabies activity. In HSR 1, the decline in case numbers has continued well into 2013 with only one reported case of rabies (skunk, Lubbock Co.) collected on February 4, 2013. That was the first confirmed case in our Region since July 17, 2012. Statewide, however, there is a different story being recorded. The total on May 13, 2013 for the state was 330 positive cases. The activity is not as severe as in 2011, but it is certainly more active than during last year. The Regional difference may relate to the rest of Texas receiving moisture while we linger in a drought. I am not certain about the reason, but we can all enjoy the near absence of rabies while it lasts. Please remind your clients and

the public in general that rabies vaccinations for pets are still required and they are still recommended for certain livestock.

Many jurisdictions are gearing up for the West Nile virus (WNV) season that has already begun in more temperate areas of Texas. The late season freezes our Region experienced this spring delayed any mosquito activity but some have been lurking about waiting for a warm-up. Just before the last round of freezes I saw a mosquito at my residence, and it got a way! Please remember to practice and promote the **4Ds**: **D**ress appropriately; **D**rain standing water; avoid being out at **D**usk and **D**awn; and **D**efend yourself with an effective repellent, proper clothing, and screens on windows if air conditioning isn't being used, etc. In 2003 HSR 1 had the highest per capita case rate in the state. Please do all you can to avoid HSR 1 having that dubious distinction again in 2013. Owners of horse, donkeys, mules and other equidae need to consider utilizing the WNV vaccine for horses. As with rabies virus it may be relatively cheap insurance compared to the cost of disposing of a dead horse.

Plague has been an infrequent event in the past, occasionally wiping out a prairie dog town. Over the past couple of years it seems to have taken second place to the drought in reducing prairie dog numbers. I am still interested in learning about prairie dog towns that seem to suddenly disappear, though. While the drought is a major player

now, I suspect plague is still present. As a reminder, please be sure to educate the public to the need for good flea control on any pets that may roam prairie dog towns.

I am pleased to announce that another new quarantine facility has been approved in HSR 1: Floydada has joined Hereford in having a new animal shelter and it was approved last month for bite-observation purposes. Levelland's new facility is nearly done, the new shelter at Pampa is on its way to completion later this year and Canadian has begun the planning process for a new structure. If your community is interested in building a new animal shelter, and it is anticipated that rabies quarantine will be performed in it, please be sure to contact us for a plan review before any ground is broken, as required in 169.28 (b) of the Rabies Rules. If you plan to build a shelter without performing rabies quarantine, we would be glad to review your plans and offer input, but that is not required by law. Reviews are beneficial because we can help avoid common errors that may have been seen elsewhere.

The gray fox/coyote Oral Rabies Vaccination Programs continue to be successful in preventing the appearance of those two variants. The pilot project for a skunk Oral Rabies Vaccination Program in Fort Bend County is still on track for this September.

Continued on page 2

Doc's Desk	1
Doc's Desk Contd.	2
Law Revision	2
Mosquitoes 2013	3
Venomous Snakes	4
Venomous Snakes Continued	5
Publications	6
C.E. Opportunity	6

HSR 1 ZONOSIS STAFF

James Alexander, DVM, MPVM
Regional Veterinarian
james.alexander@dshs.state.tx.us
Tonya Finch
Public Health Prevention Specialist
tonya.finch@dshs.state.tx.us
300 Victory Drive
WTAMU Box 60968
Canyon, TX 79016-0968
806-655-7151
806-655-6448(Fax)

Karen McDonald, MS
Zoonosis Control Specialist
karen.mcdonald@dshs.state.tx.us
6302 Iola Avenue
Lubbock, TX 79424
806-783-6422
806-783-6430 (Fax)

State Office
www.dshs.state.tx.us/region1/default.shtm

Continued from page 1

On the world-front, a new avian influenza virus is causing concern in China, as is a new coronavirus that originated in the Eastern Mediterranean that is very closely related to the virus that caused SARS (severe acute respiratory syndrome) in 2003.

An H7N9 avian influenza variant has infected 130-135 people (the reports vary) and at least 35 have died (CFR = 25.9-26.9%) as of May 14.

All of the cases have been in China, except for one, a man from Taiwan who visited China. The virus seems to most adversely affect older people, which is opposite of what the H5N1 virus does (which continues to remain active in Asia). So far a definitive reservoir for H7N9 has not been identified, but it seems to be associated primarily with live-bird markets.

ProMED-Mail reported on May 14 that the new coronavirus has infected at least 38 people and killed (CFR = 52.6%) in the following locations: Saudi Arabia - 28 (15 deaths); Jordan - 2 (2 deaths); UK - 4 (2 deaths); Germany - 2 (1 death); France - 2 (no deaths). All but 3 of the people were considered to have been infected in countries in the Eastern Mediterranean, predominantly Saudi Arabia. A definitive source for this virus has not been identified but bats were found to be a probable reservoir for the SARS virus and may also be the reservoir for the new virus. Prolonged close contact seems to be necessary for human-to-human transmission.

We will continue to monitor these emerging zoonoses and keep you apprised of new developments.

Stay safe and do all you can to protect yourself from the wild world of zoonoses.

Gas Chamber Ban

One of the changes to come out of the current legislative session that will affect some in animal control is the ban on gas chamber use by animal shelters for the euthanasia of dogs and cats. Senate Bill 360 was signed by the Governor on May 10, 2013, and became effective immediately due to more than the minimum 2/3 of the members of the house voting in favor of it. Those facilities affected however, still have a little time to adjust to this change; compliance is not required until January 1, 2014. This should allow ample time to apply for a Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) license and purchase the supplies needed for administering sodium pentobarbital, now the only approved method for dog and cat euthanasia by animal shelter staff.

The form and instructions for applying for a DEA license can be accessed through the DEA Diversion website, <http://www.deadiversion.usdoj.gov/>. You will select "New Application Online" from the list on the right side of the main page, and then "Begin Application Process". Animal control should select Form 224 for mid-level practitioners (MLP-Animal Shelter.) You will need a State ID number which is assigned by our office. Please contact Tonya Finch in the Canyon office at 806/655-7151 for assistance.

An inability or reluctance to obtain a DEA license does not permit an agency to utilize another method of euthanasia. Arrangements should be made with another agency, veterinary clinic or city to carry out this function. An offense under this section is a Class B misdemeanor.

It is also a Class B misdemeanor to euthanize an animal at an animal shelter without successfully completing a euthanasia technician training course. (ACOs have a grace period of up to 120 days after the date of initial employment to complete this.) Euthanasia technician training must be renewed every three years. For DSHS-approved course information, go to www.txaco.org, select Shelters, then Euthanasia.

To see the full text of the bill go to: <http://www.legis.state.tx.us/tlodocs/83R/billtext/pdf/SB00360F.pdf#navpanes=0>. Note: the page will appear blank. Scroll down to begin reading.



Mosquitoes to make first showing of 2013

By Michael E. Merchant, PhD, BCE
Professor and Extension Urban Entomologist
Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service

Originally Posted: 03 Apr 2013 02:58 PM PDT

Spring rains and warmer weather usually spell mosquitoes. To prove this to myself, I've been watching my backyard fountain slowly fill with recent rains, leaves and catkins from nearby oak trees. Last week I was rewarded(!?) with my first mosquito wigglers. "Wiggler" and "tumbler" are informal terms for the larval and pupal (immature) life stages of mosquitoes. Mosquito wigglers live in water, and as soon as temperatures get warm enough to drive their development, they quickly mature and emerge from pools and containers wherever they may be found.

After last summer's record West Nile virus season, any news about mosquitoes is bad news to us in Texas, and especially the Dallas area. But the species emerging right now are not likely to be the disease-carriers of last summer. According to Scott Sawlis of the Dallas County Health Department, these are more likely to be *Culex restuans*, or one of the other early mosquito species that do better in cool weather. These cool weather species do not spread West Nile virus. Nevertheless, these mosquitoes still bite and are still unwelcome in our neighborhoods.

My backyard observation site gave me the chance to photograph and [put together a short video](#) about what to look for if you see a suspicious puddle of water around your yard. In my case, after following the wigglers for a few days, I drained my fountain. Should you find a suspected breeding hole, if possible drain it, or fill it in with sand, gravel or soil. This will immediately kill any mosquito larvae breeding there. If the source is too deep or impossible to drain, mosquito dunks or granules, available through most hardware stores and garden centers, will also kill mosquito larvae for up to 30 days.

We'd all rather get rid of mosquitoes before they become a problem. So get outdoors now and check your yard. This is a great time to mosquito-proof your yard in preparation for the summer. For more information about where mosquitoes breed, and what to do about them see <http://mosquitosafari.tamu.edu>.



Venomous Snakes

Information from Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Texas Parks and Wildlife Department

Spring is upon us. The temperatures are rising and snakes are moving. It is time once again to be on the look-out for snakes.

Venomous snakes found in the United States include rattlesnakes, copperheads, cotton mouths/water moccasins, and coral snakes. They can be dangerous to outdoor workers including farmers, foresters, landscapers, groundskeepers, gardeners, painters, roofers, pavers, construction workers, laborers, mechanics, and anyone who spends time outside. Although rare, some workers with a severe allergy to snake venom may be at risk of death if bitten. It has been estimated that 7,000-8,000 people per year receive venomous bites in the United States, and about 5 of those people die. The number of deaths would be much higher if people did not seek medical care. It is important for everyone to be trained about their risk of exposure to venomous snakes, how they can prevent and protect themselves from snake bites, and what they should do if they are bitten.

Rattlesnakes:

There are many species of rattlesnakes in the United States. Rattlesnakes are the largest of the venomous snakes in the United States. They can accurately strike at up to one-third their body length. Rattlesnakes use their rattles or tails as a warning when they feel threatened. Rattlesnakes may be found sunning themselves near logs, boulders, or open areas. These snakes may be found in most work habitats including the mountains, prairies, deserts, and beaches.

Copperheads:

Copperheads vary in color from reddish to golden tan. The colored bands on their body are typically hourglass-shaped. Most adults are 18-36 inches long. They are not usually aggressive, but will often freeze when frightened. You are more likely to be bitten when unknowingly stepping on or near a copperhead. Copperheads are often found in forests, rocky areas, swamps, or near sources of water like rivers.

Cottonmouths/Water Moccasins:

Cottonmouth snakes average 50-55 inches long. The adult snake's skin is dark tan, brown, or nearly black, with vague black or dark brown cross bands. Juveniles have a bold cross banded pattern of brown or orange with a yellow tail. Cottonmouths are frequently found in or around water. They do not scare easily and will defend themselves when threatened.

Coral Snakes:

These snakes are often confused with nonvenomous king snakes, which have similar colored bands although in a different arrangement. However if the red bands are touching the yellow bands, then it is a venomous coral snake. Remember the rhyme "red and yellow kill a fellow" can help you remember that the coral snake's

red and yellow colors touch, but the harmless king snake has red touching black. Coral snakes tend to hide in leaf piles or burrow into the ground.

Preventing Snake Bites

- Do not try to handle any snake.
- Stay away from tall grass and piles of leaves when possible.
- Avoid Climbing on rocks or piles of wood where a snake may be hiding.
- Be aware that snakes tend to be active at night and in warm weather.
- Wear boots and long pants when working outdoors.
- Wear leather gloves when handling brush and debris.

First Aid

- Seek medical attention as soon as possible (dial 911 or local Emergency Medical Services)
- Try to remember the color and shape of the snake, which can help determine treatment.
- Keep still and calm. This can slow down the spread of venom.
- Apply first aid if you cannot get to the hospital right away.
- Lay or sit down with the bite below the level of the heart.
- Wash the bite with soap and water
- Cover the bite with a clean, dry dressing.

Do NOT do any of the following:

- Do not pick up the snake or try to trap it.
- Do not wait for symptoms to appear if bitten, seek immediate medical attention.
- Do not apply a tourniquet.
- Do not slash the wound with a knife.
- Do not suck out the venom.
- Do not apply ice or immerse the wound in water.
- Do not drink alcohol as a painkiller.
- Do not drink caffeinated beverages.

For more information:

www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/snakes/

www.tpwd.state.tx.us/kids/wild_things/wildlife/snakes.phtml

VENOMOUS SNAKES

RATTLESNAKE



COTTON MOUTH/WATER MOCCASIN



COPPERHEAD



CORAL





300 Victory Drive
 WTAMU Box 60968
 Canyon, TX 79016-0968
 Phone: 806-655-7151
 Fax: 806-655-6448

E-mail: james.alexander@dshs.state.tx.us

Dallam	Sherman	Hansford	Ochiltree	Lipscomb	
Hartley	Moore	Hutchinson	Roberts	Hemphill	
Oldham	Patterson	Carson	Gray	Wheeler	
Deaf Smith	Randall	Armstrong	Danley	Collingsworth	
Parmer	Castro	Swisher	Briscoe	Hall	Childress
Bailey	Lamb	Hale	Floyd	Motley	
Cochran	Beckley	Lubbock	Crosby	Dickens	King
Vanhook	Terry	Lynn	Garza		

DSHS FREE PUBLICATIONS

Those who have access to the internet can order DSHS publications online. The Zoonosis Control Branch has pamphlets on a variety of topics, such as mosquito control, rabies, animal bites, plague, encephalitis, Rocky Mountain spotted fever, and tick borne diseases. You can search for publications by title, subject, keyword, language, format or publications number, and pamphlets will be shipped to you at no cost. To order pamphlets online, visit the website:

<http://webds.dshs.state.tx.us/mamd/litcat/default.asp>

If you have any questions, please call Tonya at (806) 655-7151 ext. 1104.

CE Opportunities

South Plains Wildlife Rehabilitation Center Inc.:
 Handling Wildlife Safety
 Tour and Program, 2.5 CEUs
 Tue., June 11

Rabies Review, Canyon
 7 CEUs

Tue., July 16

Rabies Review, Lubbock Animal Services
 7 CEUs

Thur., July 18

Amarillo Zoo

Program and Tour, 3 CEUs

Thur., August 8

Information will be emailed out soon!

Mark your calendar!

Texas Department of State Health Services HSR 1
 Animal Control Officer Basic Training Course
 On October 15-16, 2013
 Amarillo, Texas

More information coming soon!