



Region 8 Animal Control Newsletter

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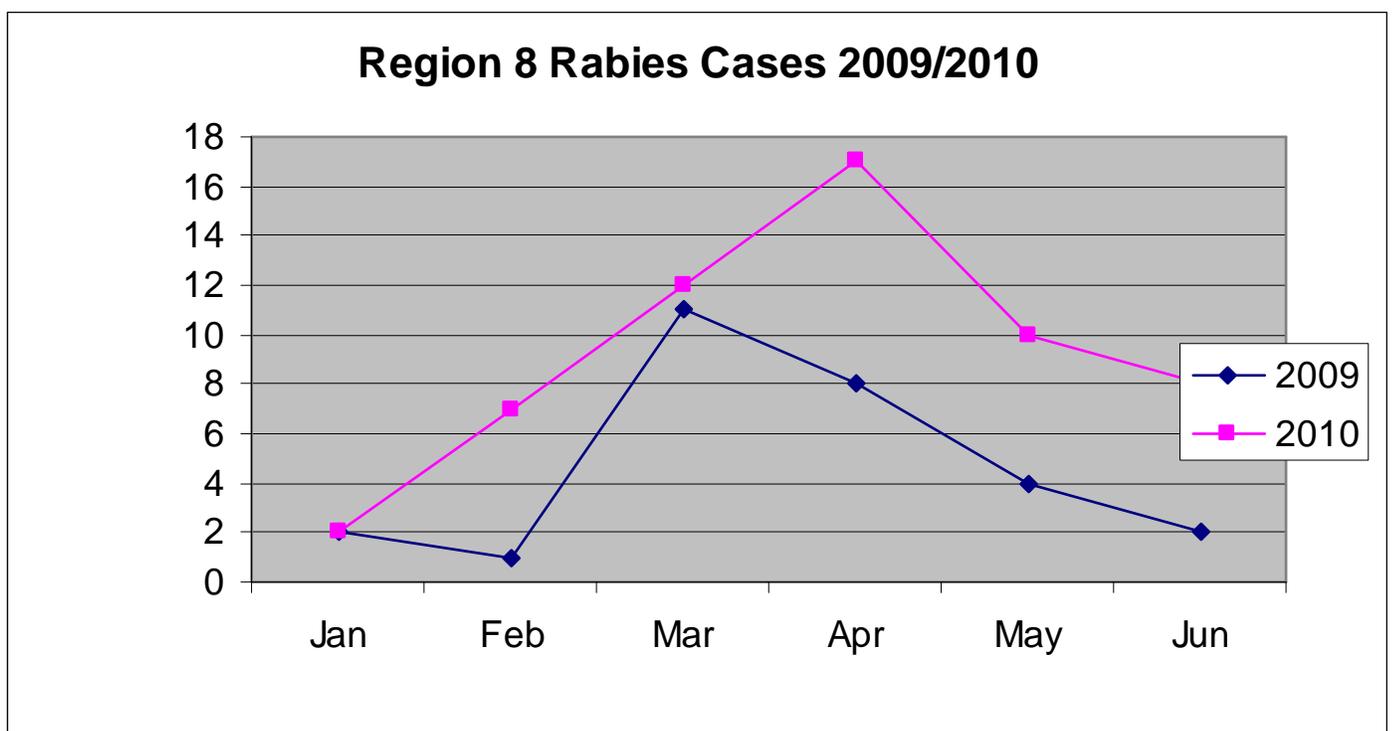


photo courtesy Dave Bergman, USDA

Rise in Rabies Cases in Region 8

This spring, there was an increase in the number of rabies cases in Region 8, most notably in the central part of the region. Most of these cases were in skunks and were due to infection with the South Central Skunk strain of rabies virus. In rabies-associated terminology, 'spillover cases' occur when a rabies strain adapted to a given host species

infects another. This year, we have seen several spillover cases of South Central Skunk rabies that involved other wildlife and domestic animals including dogs, cats, foxes and even horses. The infection of domestic animals with any strain of rabies virus poses a serious risk to public health and safety because it increases the chances of human exposure. In at least two recent instances, domestic animals that were infected with skunk rabies exposed multiple people to the deadly virus. The best protection against this is vaccination. If you want your livestock protected, vaccinate just as you do your dogs and cats. Barn cats need vaccinating too. Feral colonies of cats pose a real problem because they are often fed by humans but remain unseen for most of the day, during which they may interact with potentially infected wildlife. Feral cats and skunks can and sometimes will use the same food and water sources. They can be extremely hard to catch to vaccinate, bite readily, and can be extremely dangerous given their “I led two lives” type existence. Vaccinating or eliminating peridomestic feral cat colonies can help to control rabies in or around your property. Eliminating outside pet food bowls and edible trash around your home or property will help deter both feral cats and skunks from colonizing your property. Children should be warned about the potential danger and trained not to touch or pick-up feral cats or kittens.



Large colorful Rabies Posters are available from our office at no charge for your next rabies clinic. Just call Carlee at 830-591-4385

Warning: Rabies Alert

By Edward J. Wozniak DVM, PhD, Regional Public Health Veterinarian



The spring of 2010 has brought an unprecedented number of skunk rabies cases to Health Service Region 8. Between 1/20/2010 and 6/15/2010, the Department of State Health Services, Zoonosis Control Division received 31 reports of skunks that were confirmed positive for rabies, most of which were infected with the south-central Skunk (SCS) variant of the virus. Because of the potential for infected skunks to interact with and bite pets and livestock, skunk rabies is particularly dangerous to public health and safety. In many cases these animal interactions and exposures go unseen during the night, after which the exposed domestic animals

can become rabid and in turn, infect their owners or other people who are bitten by them. Of particular concern are the numerous feral and stray cats in the area. This population of cats is typically unvaccinated, can be aggressive towards humans (especially if restrained handled or touched) and readily interact with skunks. During the first two weeks of June, 2010 the Region 8 Zoonosis Control Division had already received several reports of people being exposed to rabies after they had touched or attempted to touch or handle a feral cat or kitten. To protect yourself and your family from this potentially life threatening disease we suggest taking the following list of preventive measures.

- 1) Do not feed, touch, or handle stray or feral cats. If you notice such animals on or around your property, promptly report it to your local animal control authorities.
- 2) Advise your children of the potential hazard and instruct them not to touch or pickup stray animals. Even a small kitten can easily transmit rabies if it is infected.
- 3) If bitten or scratched by a cat, promptly seek medical attention for a bite evaluation and treatment. If the animal can be safely captured, capture it and turn it over to your local animal control authorities, or ask them for their assistance in capturing it so that it can be either tested for rabies or appropriately quarantined at a rabies quarantine facility. Ideally, the capture should be done by a trained animal control officer. Alternatively, the capture can be done with some type of catchpole, snare, heavy duty bite proof gloves, a live trap or other animal capture device. All cases in which the offending animal gets away and cannot be found or recovered should be handled as if it were positive for rabies.
- 4) Promptly report any skunks acting abnormally (walking 'funny', being out and active during the day, acting aggressively etc) to your local animal control authorities.

- 5) Keep your own dogs and cats current on their rabies vaccinations and if possible, limit their exposure to potentially infected wildlife by bringing them indoors at night.
- 6) If your pet has contact with a rabid animal, promptly report the incident to your local animal control authorities and follow their recommendations for its treatment. The development of rabies in the animal can usually be prevented with prompt veterinary intervention.

2010 Rabies Cases for Wilson Guadalupe and Gonzales Counties 1/2010-6/2010

County	+ skunks	+ bats	+dogs/cats
Wilson	1	1	2
Guadalupe	15	4	
Gonzales	5	0	1

Edward J. Wozniak DVM, PhD
Region 8 Public Health Veterinarian

DSHS ACO Training Course Schedule

Approved Courses conducted by the Department of State Health Services Zoonosis Control Branch¹



Call the number provided or click on contact name for the *course date* for which you would like to register to ask questions about a particular course.

Date	Type	Location	Contact(s)	Phone Number
*Jul 14-15, 2010	Basic	Conroe, TX	Gary Johnson Brittany Singletary Jael Miller	(713) 767-3300
Jul 20-21, 2010	Basic	Fort Worth, Texas	Heidi Rentschler Ron Cornelison	(817) 264-4920
Aug 11-12, 2010	Basic	Wichita Falls, Texas	Debra Perkins	(325) 795-5857
Sep 14-15, 2010	Basic	2408 South 37th St., Temple, TX 76504	Beverlee Nix, D.V.M. Leslie Platz Rebecca Hejnal Melissa Maass	(254) 778-6744
Oct 26-28, 2010	Basic	Tyler, Texas	James H. Wright, D.V.M., M.P.V.M Angela Hopkins	(903) 533-5212
Nov 17-18, 2010	Basic	Sugar Land, TX	Gary Johnson Brittany Singletary Jael Miller	(713) 767-3300

¹These courses serve to meet the training requirements set forth in Texas Health and Safety Code, Ch. 829, Animal Control Officer Training.

*Indicates that a course is full.

Internet address for non DSHS courses

<http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/idcu/health/zoonosis/education/training/nonaco>

We have received some positive lab results for Ehrlichia chaffeensis and Rickettsia amblyommii from ticks that were submitted from our region. Because of this, we are re-posting directions for the tick submission procedure

Stop Ticks

Courtesy of the CDC

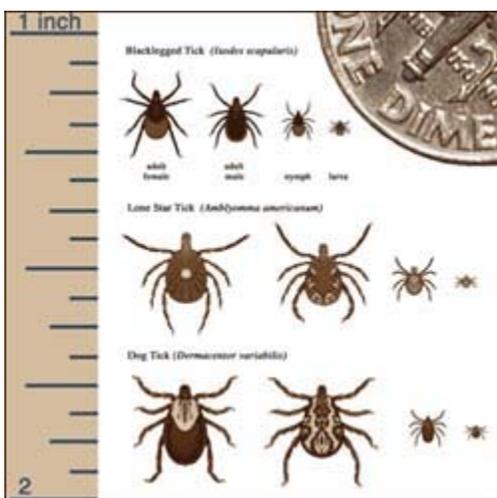


When you're outside this spring and summer, prevent tick bites and reduce your risk of tick-borne disease by following these tips.

Gardening, camping, hiking, just playing outdoors – These are all great spring and summertime activities, but don't forget

about the ticks that may be in the same environment. Fortunately there are several tactics you can use to prevent tick bites and reduce your risk of tick-borne disease.

Some of the more common diseases that you can get from a tick bite include (listed alphabetically):



- [Babesiosis](#)
- [Ehrlichiosis](#)
- [Lyme disease](#)
- [Rocky Mountain spotted fever](#)
- [Southern tick-associated rash illness](#)
- [Tick-borne relapsing fever](#)
- [Tularemia](#)

Other diseases that you can get from a tick in the United States include anaplasmosis, Colorado tick fever, and Powassan encephalitis.

Some species and some life stages of ticks are so small that they can be difficult to see, but all hungrily look for animals and people to bite. Depending on the species, you can find ticks in

various environments, often in or near wooded areas. You may come into contact with ticks when walking through infested areas or by brushing up against infested vegetation (such as leaf litter or shrubs). Ticks also feed on mammals and birds, which play a role in maintaining ticks and the pathogens they carry.

Tick-borne diseases can occur worldwide. Fortunately, there are some simple steps you can take to protect yourself and your family.

Protect Yourself from Tick Bites

- **Know where to expect ticks.** Ticks live in moist and humid environments, particularly in or near wooded or grassy areas. You may come into contact with ticks during outdoor activities around your home or when walking through vegetation such as leaf litter or shrubs. Always walk in the center of trails, in order to avoid ticks.
- **Use a repellent with DEET** (on skin or clothing) **or permethrin** (on clothing) and wear long sleeves, long pants and socks. Products containing permethrin can be used to treat boots, clothing and camping gear which can remain protective through several washings. Repellents containing 20% or more DEET (N, N-diethyl-m-toluamide) can be applied to the skin, and they can protect up to several hours. **Always follow product instructions!** Parents should apply this product to their children, avoiding the hands, eyes, and mouth.
- **Wear light-colored clothing**, which allows you to see ticks crawling on your clothing.
- **Tuck your pant legs into your socks** so that ticks cannot crawl up inside of your pant legs. Some ticks can crawl down into shoes and are small enough to crawl through most socks. When traveling in areas with [lone star ticks](#) (which are associated with [Southern tick-associated rash illness](#), [ehrlichiosis](#), and possibly [Rocky Mountain spotted fever](#)) you should examine your feet and ankles to ensure that ticks are not attached.

For detailed information about using DEET on children, see [West Nile Virus: What You Need to Know about Mosquito Repellent](#). For detailed information about tick prevention and control, see [Lyme Disease Prevention and Control](#). For detailed information geared to outdoor workers, see NIOSH Safety and Health Topic: [Tick-borne Diseases](#).

HOW TO SUBMIT TICKS IN TEXAS

Texas health care providers and residents who want ticks identified and tested for select tick-borne disease agents should ship tick specimens to Austin DSHS. The new submission address and contact information can be found

at (<http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/idcu/health/zoonosis/forms/human/TxTickSubmitForm.pdf>) and (<http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/idcu/health/zoonosis/forms/human/TxTickSubmitInst.pdf>)

Background Information: DSHS partners with the University of North Texas Health Science Center (UNTHSC) DNA Identity/Lyme Disease Laboratory to test ticks for disease agents in the *Borrelia*, *Ehrlichia*, and *Rickettsia* genera using molecular methods. Ticks must first be submitted

to the DSHS Zoonosis Control office for identification after which they will be forwarded to UNTHSC for testing. Only ticks that were attached to a human host may be submitted for testing. There is no charge for testing; however this service is available only to Texas residents submitting specimens from a Texas address. Submissions received from outside of Texas will not be tested and will not be returned to the submitter.

Instructions for Submitting Ticks for Laboratory Testing

The Department of State Health Services (DSHS) had partnered with the University of North Texas Health Science Center (UNTHSC) DNA Identity/Lyme Disease Laboratory to test ticks for disease agents in the *Borrelia*, *Ehrlichia*, and *Rickettsia* genera using molecular methods. Ticks must first be submitted to the DSHS Zoonosis Control office for identification after which they will be forwarded to UNTHSC for testing. There is no charge for testing, however this service is available only to Texas residents submitting specimens from a Texas address. Submissions received from outside of Texas will not be tested and will not be returned to the submitter.

Tick Collection

1. Only ticks that were attached to a human host may be submitted for testing. Do not submit ticks removed from animals.
2. When handling or removing ticks, use forceps or tweezers. If you use your hands, wear disposable gloves or shield your fingers with a paper towel or other suitable material. When removing ticks from a person, grasp the tick as close to the skin as possible and pull upward with steady, even pressure. **DO NOT** twist or jerk the tick, as this may cause the mouthparts to break off, leaving them embedded in the skin.
3. Carefully place the tick(s) into a sturdy, leak-proof container or screw cap vial. Ticks may be submitted live or preserved in 70% ethyl or isopropyl alcohol. **DO NOT** preserve ticks in formalin, as this chemical will interfere with laboratory testing. Place ticks from different persons/collection sites into separate vials, marking each vial with appropriate identifying information so that each can be matched to its corresponding tick submission form.

Sample Submission

1. Completely fill out a Texas Tick Submission Form for each vial or container of ticks submitted.
2. Place the vial(s), sufficiently padded if breakable, and the accompanying Tick Submission Form(s) into a mailing tube and mail to:

Texas Department of State Health Services
 ATTN: Zoonosis Control - Mail Stop 1956
 1100 W 49th St
 Austin, TX 78756

Identification and Testing

1. DSHS Zoonosis Control personnel will identify all ticks to genus and species, stage of development, and state of engorgement. Turn around time will be 1-2 days.
2. DSHS Zoonosis Control personnel will forward the identified ticks to the UNTHSC laboratory for testing.
3. All ticks will be tested for the presence of pathogenic agents from the *Borrelia*, *Ehrlichia*, and *Rickettsia* genera. All positives will be further identified to the species and, where applicable, to the subspecies and/or strain.

IDENTIFICATION	Specimen Number: _____ Region: _____ Date Received: _____				
	Number submitted	Genus	Species	Stage (F M N L)¹	State (UNE PE E)²
1: F – Female; M – Male; N – Nymph; L – Larva 2: UNE – Unengorged; PE – Partially Engorged; E – Engorged					
RESULTS	Test	Assay	Tech	Results	Remarks

Have a Happy Summer!

