

Rabies Exposures*

There were no human rabies cases in 2017. The last case reported in BC occurred in 2003. Only bats carry rabies in BC. When a person reports an encounter with a bat or other animal, public health authorities assess the rabies risk and may provide rabies post-exposure prophylaxis to prevent infection.

The rate of reported rabies exposures in BC increased in 2017 to 221 exposures or 4.6/100,000 (Figure 28.1). This was caused by an increase in exposures occurring outside Canada, accounting for 56% of all exposures. This seems to be attributable to an increase in monkey bites and scratches occurring in travelers to Asia.

The majority (81%) of exposures occurring in BC or Canada involved bats, the only rabies reservoir in BC (Figure 28.2). Dogs, cats and monkeys accounted for 91% of international exposures. Forty BC residents were exposed to monkeys, the majority in Thailand and Bali; this is an increase compared to previous years. The vast majority of all exposures (83%) were due to animal bites or scratches.

Fraser Health reported the highest number of rabies exposures (N=81) but rates close to the provincial average (Figure 28.3); the majority (69%) of exposures occurred internationally. Vancouver and Fraser North experienced an important increase in exposures outside Canada since 2016. The highest rate

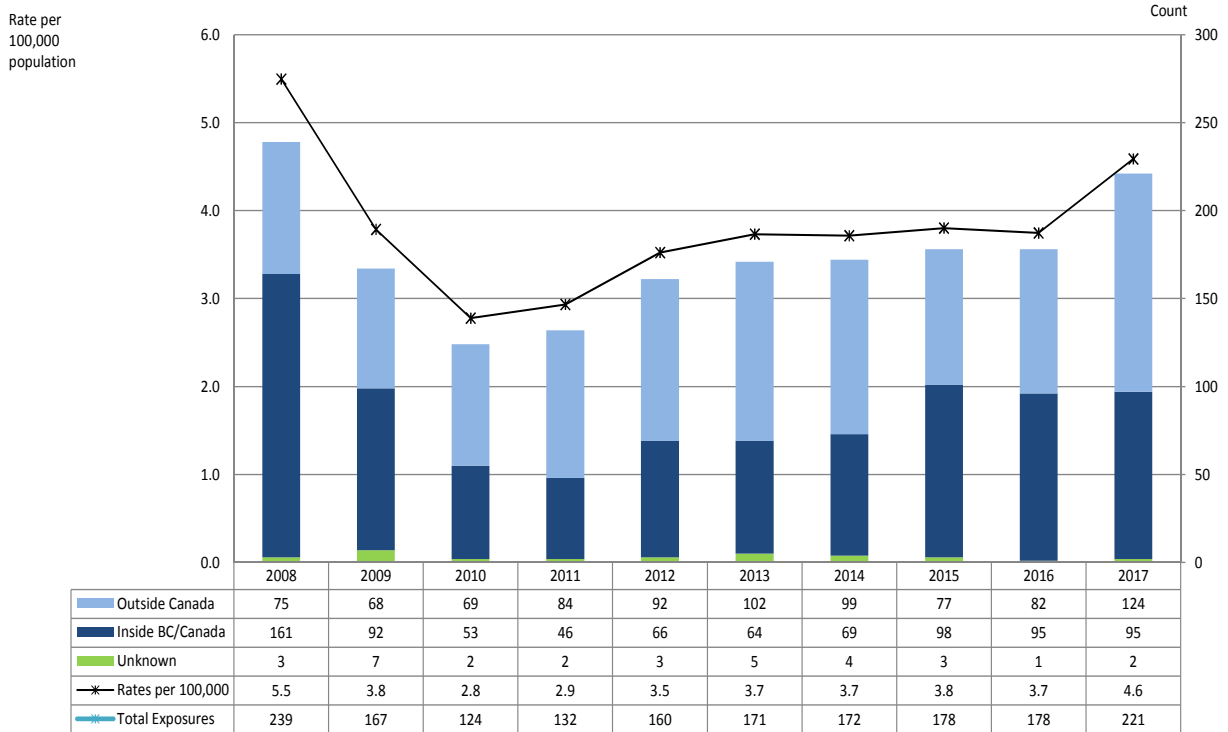
of exposure was once again reported in Interior Health HSDAs where the majority of exposures (81%) occurred within BC or Canada. The Northeast also reported a high exposure rate in 2017 but this represented a small number of exposures.

Contrary to past years, the highest rates of exposure were reported in adults. The majority of young adults were exposed internationally and the majority of children were exposed in BC or Canada (Figure 28.4).

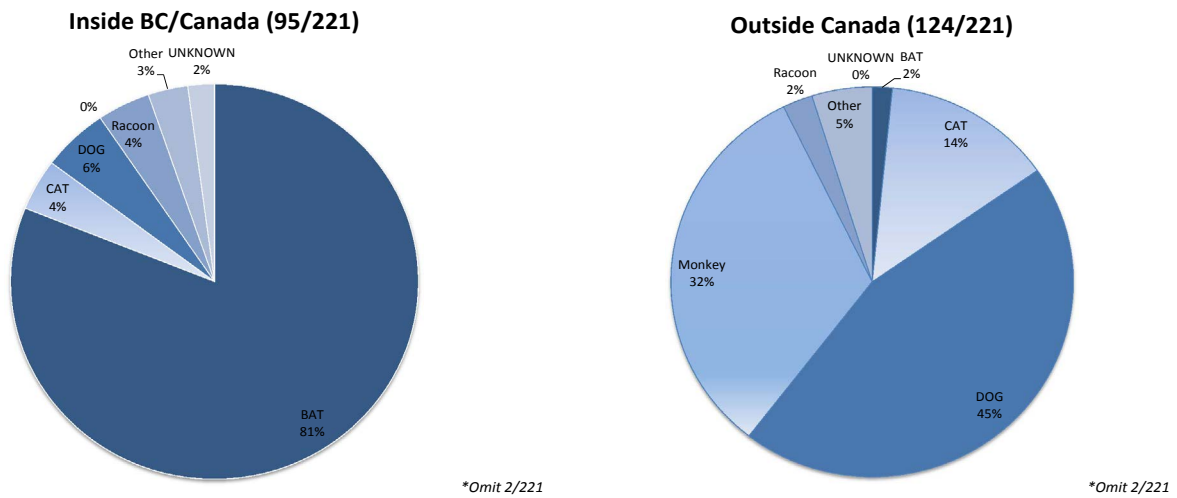
Most BC/Canada exposures were reported in July and August when bats are active (Figure 28.5). International exposures occurred throughout the year.

*The terms “exposure” denotes a report of an individual exposed to an animal which presents a risk of rabies infection. Rabies exposures were defined in Panorama as “confirmed exposure” AND “MHO recommends RPEP”.

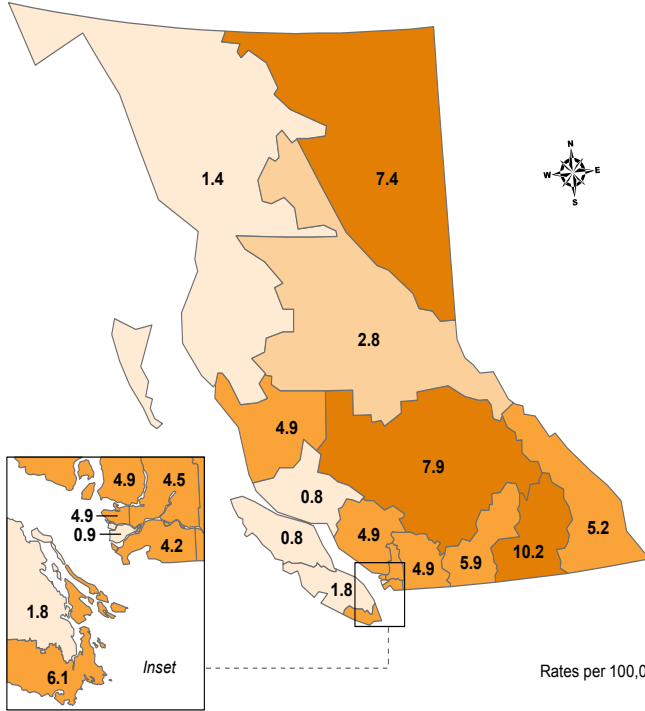
28.1 Rabies Exposures Rates by Year, 2008-2017



28.2 Rabies Exposures by Percentage of Animal Species Involved, 2017

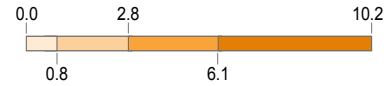


28.3 Rabies Exposure Rates by HSDA, 2017

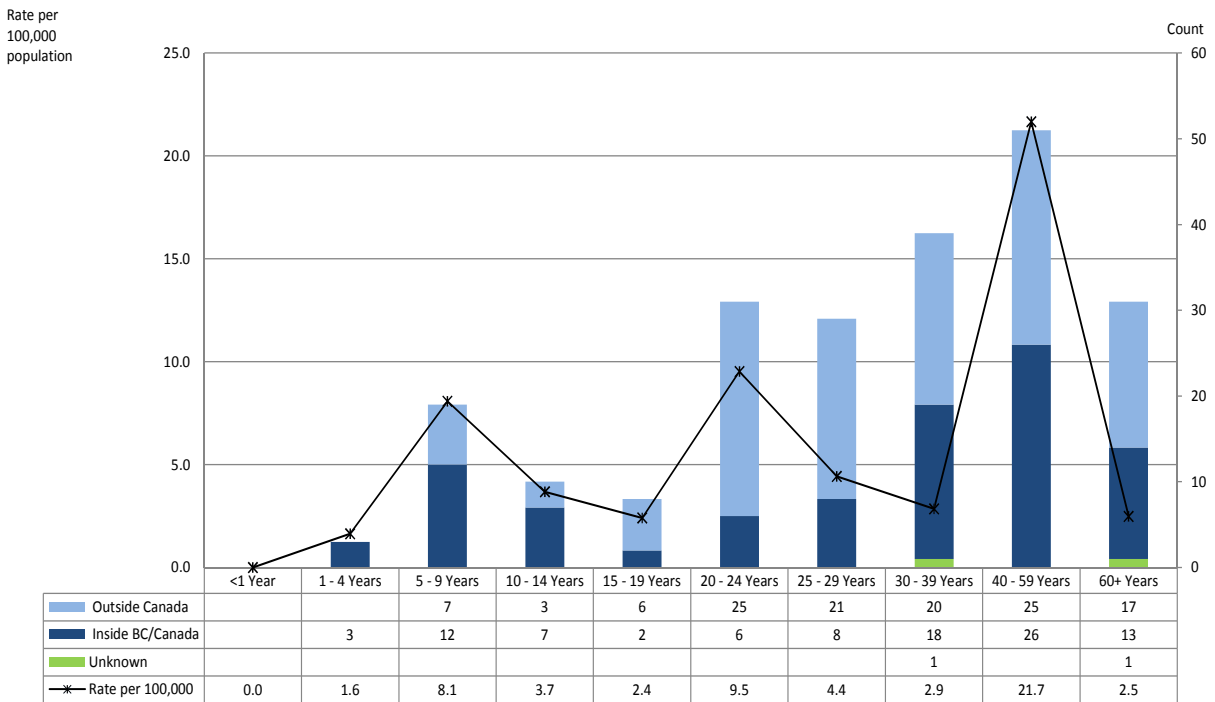


ID	Health Service Delivery Area	Exps.	Rate	BC/Can. Int'l	
				Exps.	Exps.
11	East Kootenay	4	5.2	4	0
12	Kootenay Boundary	8	10.2	6	2
13	Okanagan	22	5.9	17	5
14	Thompson Cariboo Shuswap	18	7.9	15	3
21	Fraser East	15	4.9	10	5
22	Fraser North	30	4.5	7	23
23	Fraser South	35	4.2	7	28
31	Richmond	2	0.9	1	1
32	Vancouver	*33	4.9	5	26
33	North Shore/Coast Garibaldi	14	4.9	5	9
41	South Vancouver Island	24	6.1	6	18
42	Central Vancouver Island	5	1.8	4	1
43	North Vancouver Island	1	0.8	1	0
51	Northwest	1	1.4	1	0
52	Northern Interior	4	2.8	3	1
53	Northeast	5	7.4	3	2

Note: *The location of 2 exposures in Vancouver were not reported.



28.4 Rabies Exposures by Age Group, 2017



28.5 Rabies Exposures by Month, 2017

