

Rabies Exposures*

There were no human rabies cases in 2015. 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 has remained constant since 2012 with 178 exposures or 3.8/100,000 in 2015 (Figure 33.1). It dropped in 2009 following a change in the provincial recommendations whereby individuals finding a bat in their bedroom or nearby no longer receive post exposure prophylaxis. Overall, 98 (55.1%) of the reported exposures occurred in BC or Canada; this proportion increased in 2015, mostly driven by Interior Health.

The majority (75%) of exposures occurring in BC/Canada involved bats, the only rabies reservoir in BC (Figure 33.2). Dogs accounted for 58% of international exposures. As in recent years, the majority (62.9%) of exposures were due to bites (Figure 33.3). Fewer were due to handling of an animal, scratches and contact with saliva.

For the first time, Interior Health reported the highest number of rabies exposures, the majority (75.4%) of which occurred in BC/Canada (Figure 33.4). In fact, 50% of all BC/Canada exposures in 2015 occurred

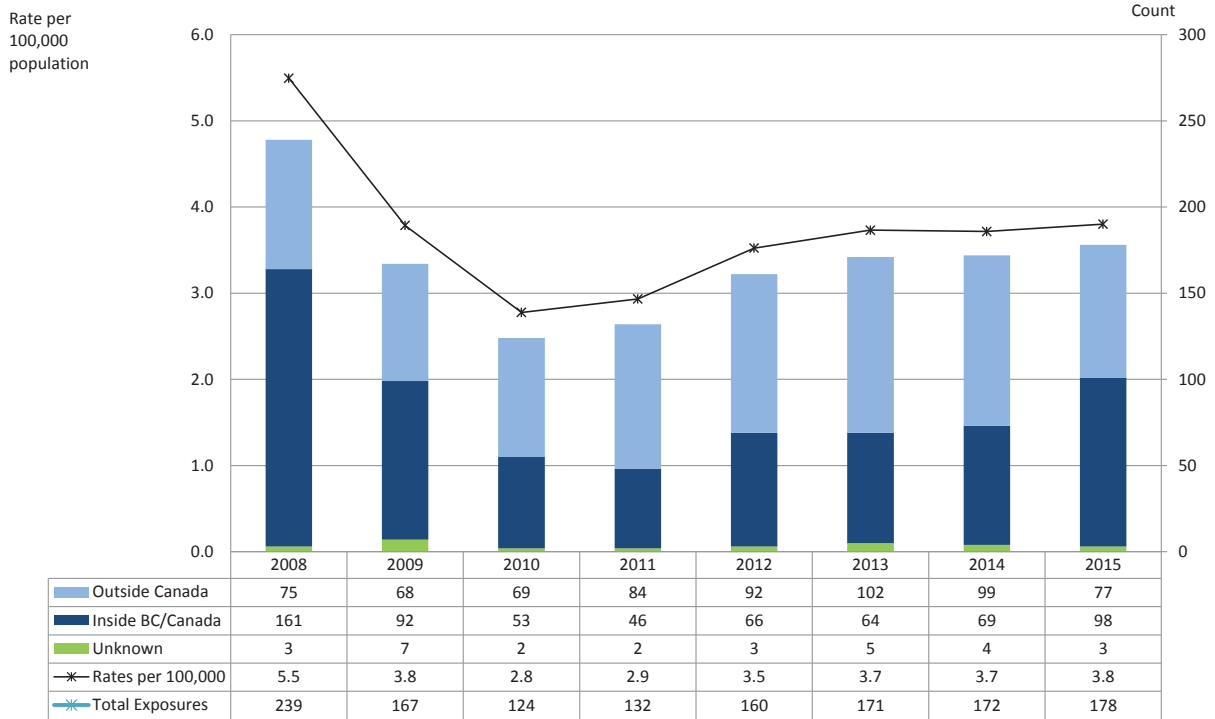
in IHA. Kootenay Boundary, Okanagan and Thompson Cariboo Shuswap all reported an increase in rates of human exposures in 2015 as compared to previous years.

As usual, the highest rates of exposure were reported in children and young adults (Figure 33.5).

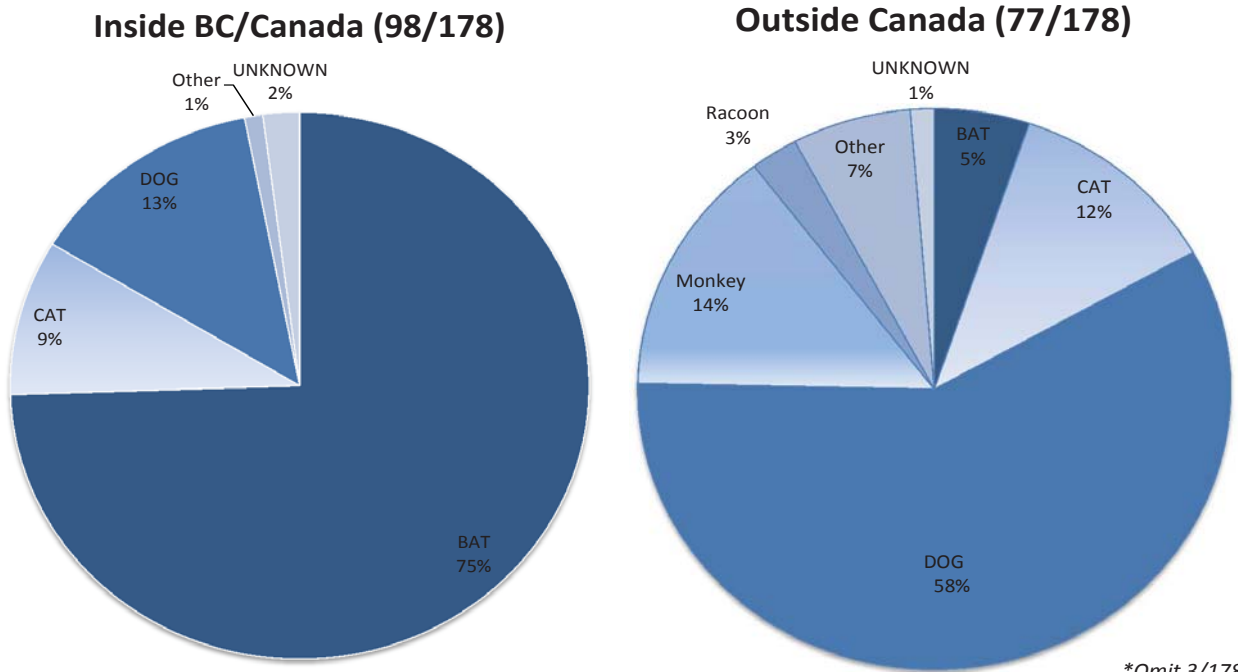
Most BC/Canada exposures were reported between June and September when bats are active (Figure 33.6). This was an earlier start to the season which usually starts in July, perhaps due to the warm spring weather in 2015. In March, 6 individuals in TCS received RPEP after being exposed to a dog with neurological symptoms that was not tested for rabies. While there was seasonality to domestic rabies exposures, 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".

33.1 Rabies Exposures Rates by Year, 2008-2015

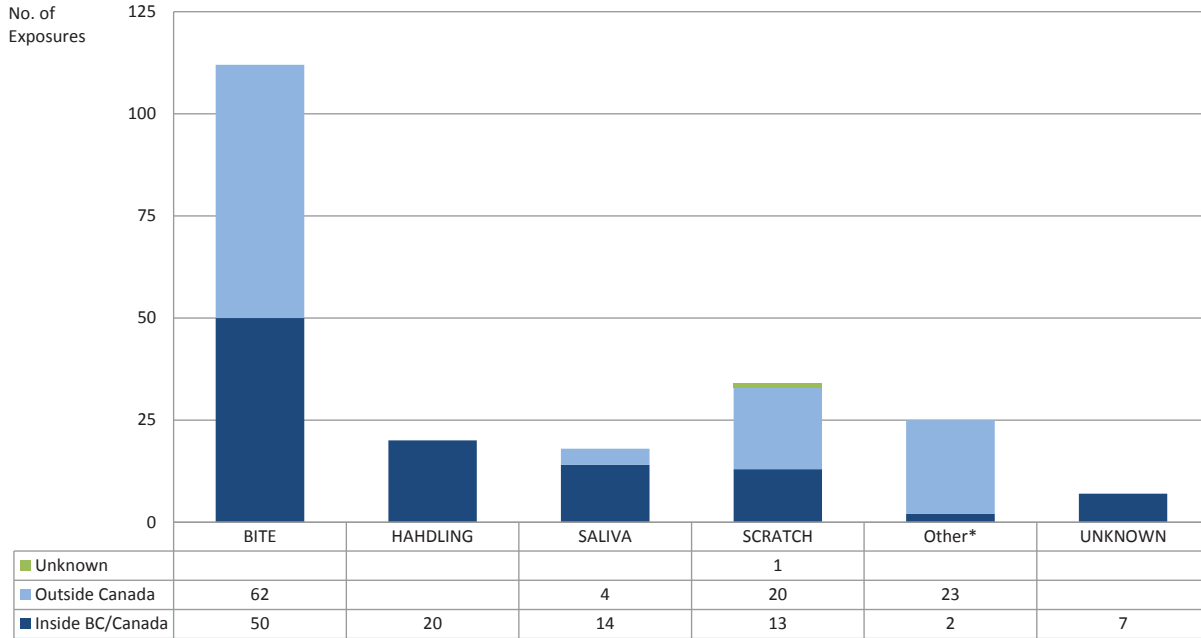


33.2 Rabies Exposures by Percentage of Animal Species Involved, 2015

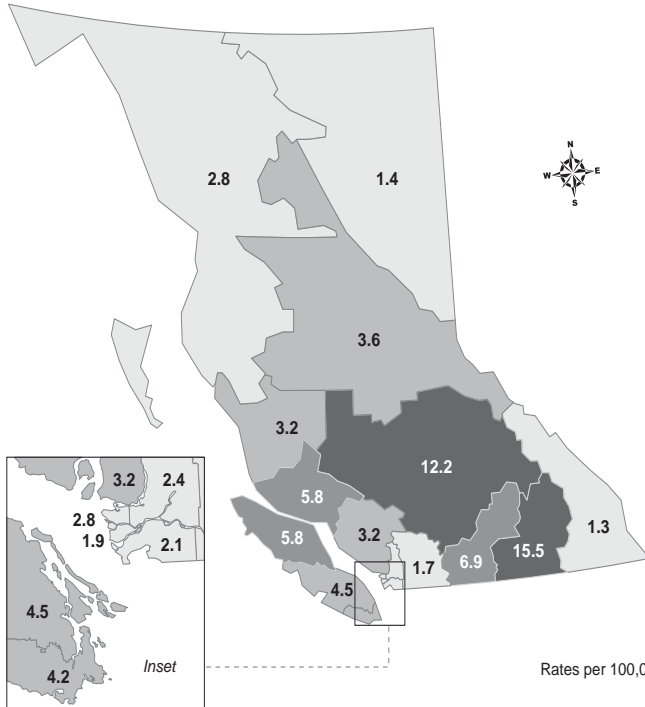


*Omit 3/178

33.3 Rabies Exposures by Type of Exposure, 2015

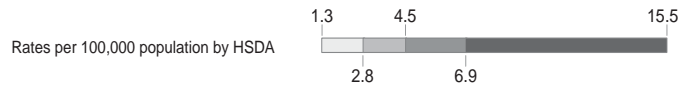


33.4 Rabies Exposure Rates by HSDA, 2015

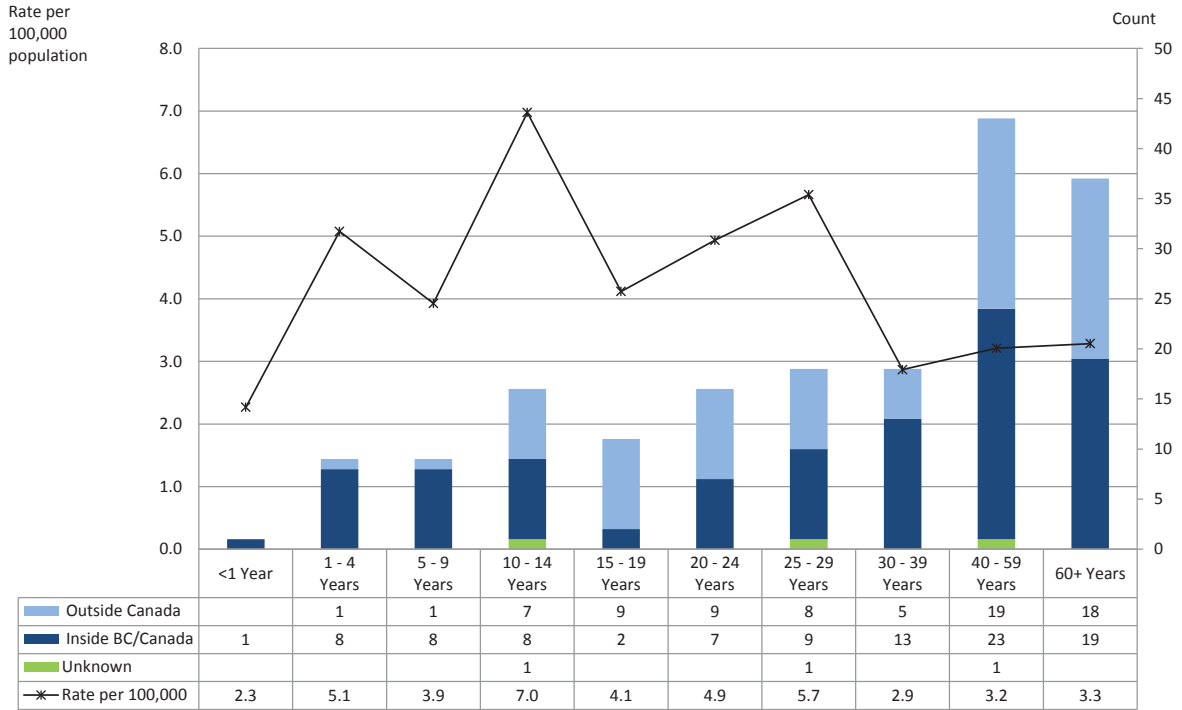


ID	Health Service Delivery Area	Exps.	Rate	BC/Can. Exps.	Int'l Exps.
11	East Kootenay	1	1.3	1	0
12	Kootenay Boundary	12	15.5	8	4
13	Okanagan	25	6.9	21	4
14	Thompson Cariboo Shuswap	*27	12.2	19	6
21	Fraser East	5	1.7	2	3
22	Fraser North	16	2.4	9	7
23	Fraser South	17	2.1	8	9
31	Richmond	4	1.9	0	4
32	Vancouver	*19	2.8	2	16
33	North Shore/Coast Garibaldi	9	3.2	4	5
41	South Vancouver Island	16	4.2	7	9
42	Central Vancouver Island	12	4.5	7	5
43	North Vancouver Island	7	5.8	4	3
51	Northwest	2	2.8	2	0
52	Northern Interior	5	3.6	4	1
53	Northeast	1	1.4	0	1

*Note: The location of 3 exposures (2 TCS; 1 Van) were not reported.



33.5 Rabies Exposures by Age Group, 2015



33.6 Rabies Exposures by Month, 2015

