

Rabies Exposures*

There were no human rabies cases in 2016. 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 2016 (Figure 32.1). 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. The transition from CFIA to provincial rabies management in 2014 did not impact the provincial incidence. In 2016, 95 (53.4%) of the reported exposures occurred in BC or Canada; this proportion is similar to 2015.

The majority (82%) of exposures occurring in BC/Canada involved bats, the only rabies reservoir in BC (Figure 32.2). Dogs, cats and monkeys accounted for 82% of international exposures. A smaller proportion (54.5%) of exposures than in previous years was due to bites; more were due to scratches and unknown exposures (Figure 32.3).

Fraser North reported the highest number of rabies exposures (N=39), with a notable increase compared

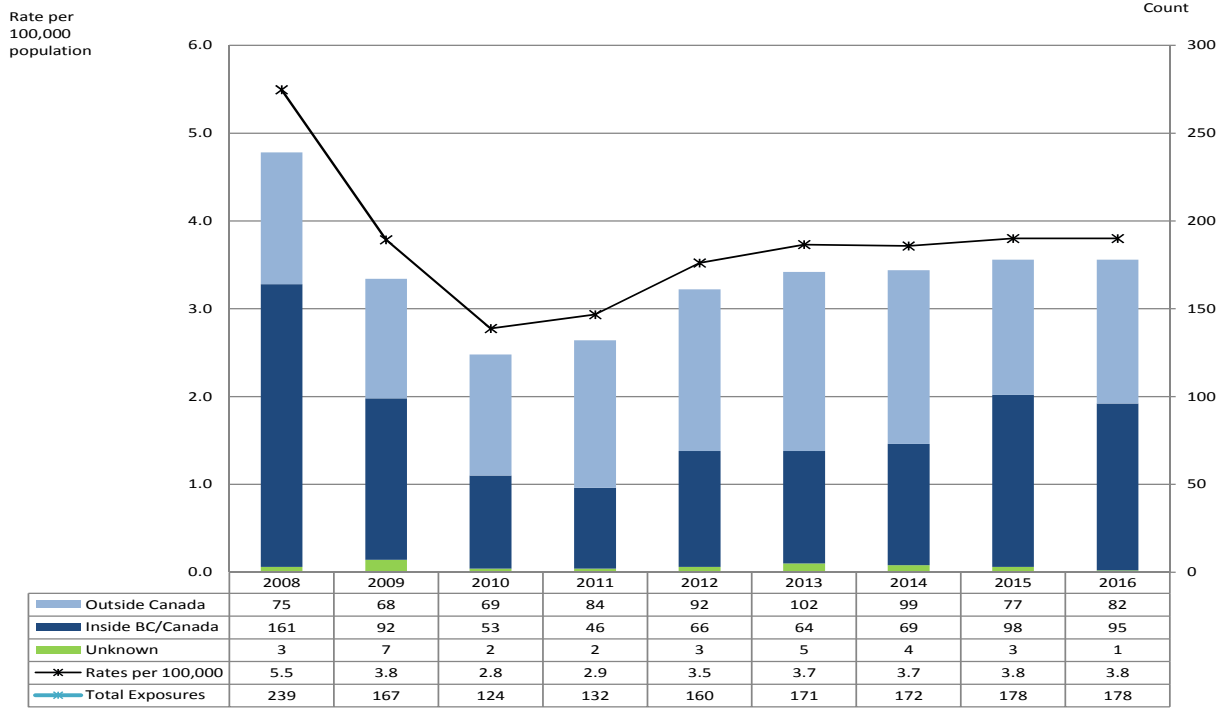
to previous years (Figure 32.4). No particular exposure events were noted. The highest rate of exposure was once again reported in Interior Health HSDAs where the majority of exposures (67.2%) occur within BC/Canada. South Vancouver Island also reported a high exposure rate in 2016 with 85.7% occurring within BC/Canada. This was in part explained by a group of 5 people requiring RPEP following a single local bat exposure.

As usual, the highest rates of exposure were reported in children and young adults, with children mainly exposed in BC and young adults mainly exposed international (Figure 32.5).

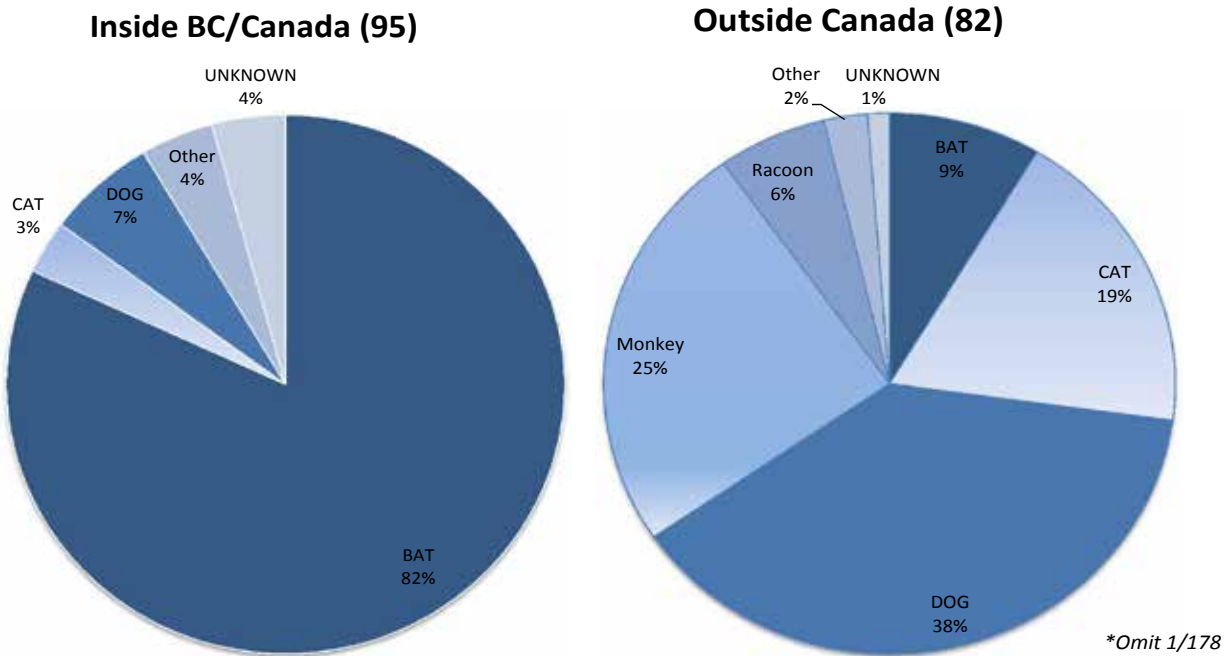
Most BC/Canada exposures were reported between July and August when bats are active (Figure 32.6). In April, 4 individuals in CVI received RPEP after being exposed to a bat in BC. International exposures occurred throughout the year with a slightly higher number in the late winter and spring, likely associated with the travel patterns of BC residents.

*The term “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”.

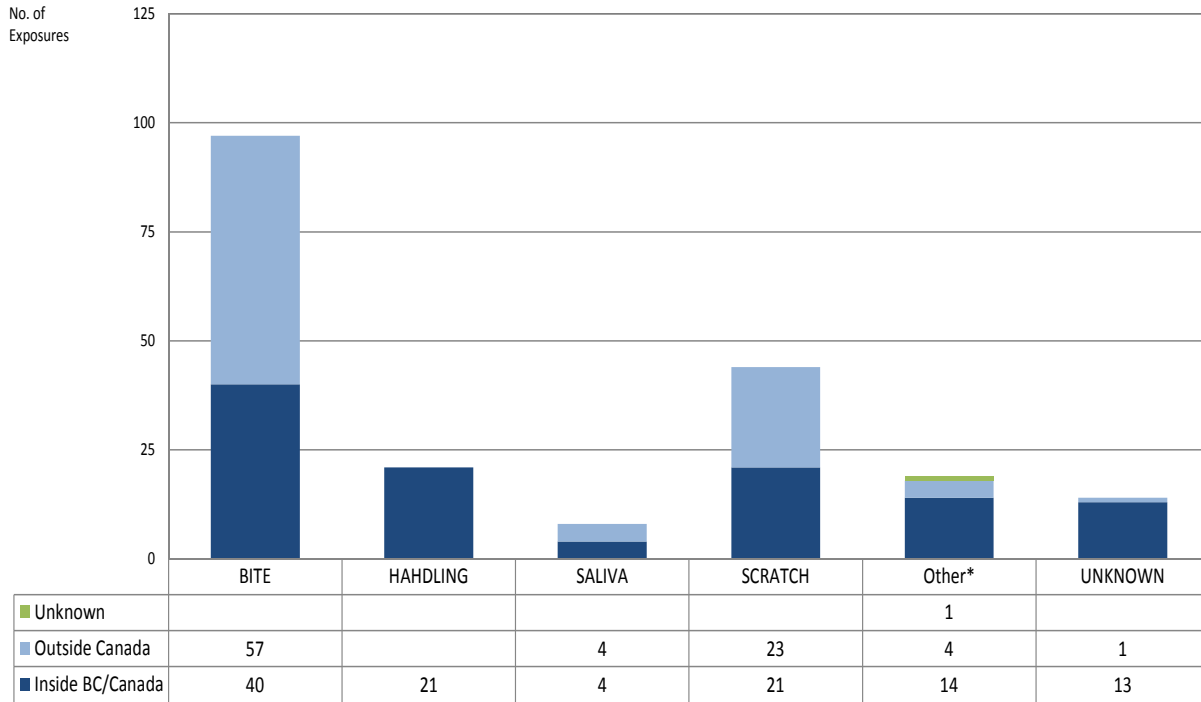
32.1 Rabies Exposures Rates by Year, 2008-2016



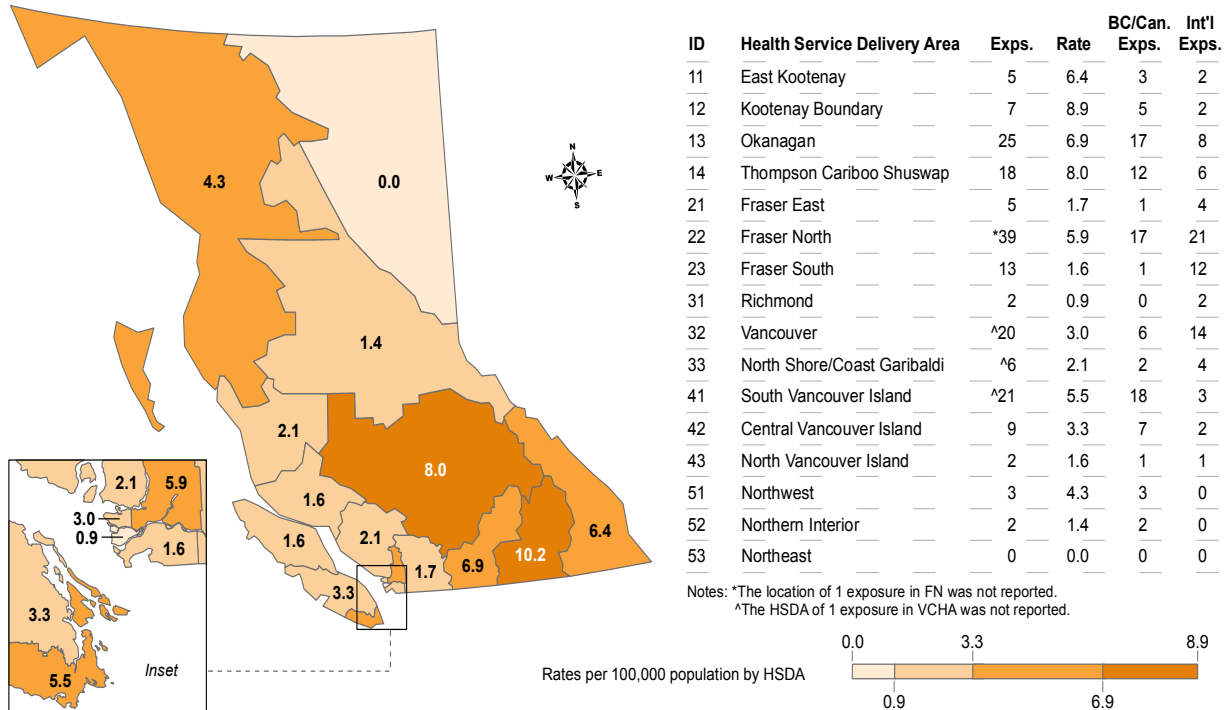
32.2 Rabies Exposures by Animal Species Involved, 2016



32.3 Rabies Exposures by Type of Exposure, 2016

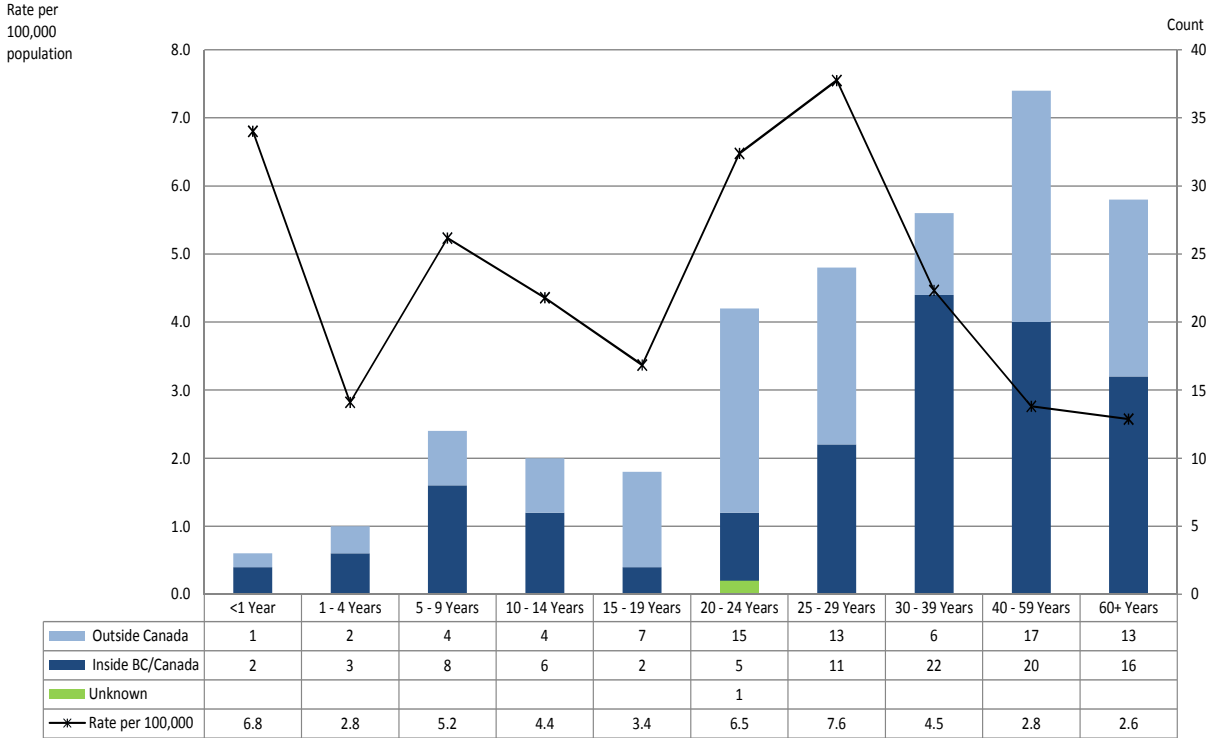


32.4 Rabies Exposure Rates by HSDA, 2016**



** Note that 1 Rabies exposure case is missing HSDA information in VCHA and is not reported in the map.

32.5 Rabies Exposures by Age Group, 2016



32.6 Rabies Exposures by Month, 2016

