

Rabies and Bats

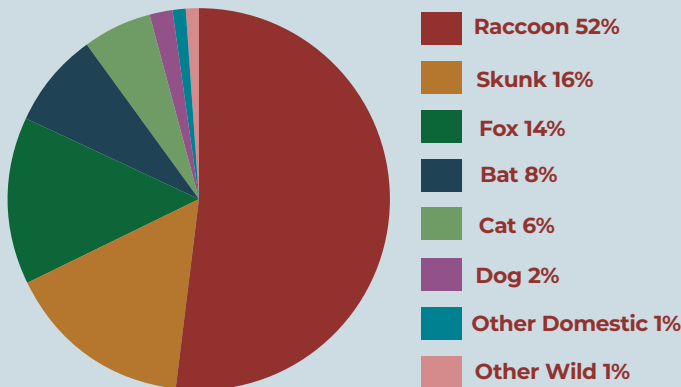
in South Carolina



SOUTH CAROLINA
DEPARTMENT OF
PUBLIC HEALTH

Rabid Bats

Percentages of Rabid Animals, 2002 – 2023



The majority of human rabies deaths in the US are from unreported bat exposures!

Every year, about 148 animals test positive for rabies in South Carolina.

Rabies Prevention



Never touch bats with your bare hands. Educate children on why they should not handle bats or other wild animals.



Vaccinate pets against rabies. By law, all dogs, cats and ferrets should be vaccinated. Keep shots up to date, whether annually or as directed by a veterinarian.



Prevent bats from entering homes or other buildings. Bats can fit through a hole that is as small as a quarter-inch by a half-inch, which is approximately the size of a dime!



If there was human or pet exposure, have all bats captured and tested for rabies. Directions on how to safely capture a bat can be found on the CDC's webpage, or contact a pest control operator for assistance.

Dealing with Exposure



If Exposure Occurs:

1. Immediately wash bite/wound with soap and water.
2. Contact a health care provider, even for minor incidents.
3. Notify your local Public Health office. Visit dph.sc.gov/RabiesContacts to find your local office.
4. Call 888-847-0902 (Option 2) 24/7 to reach a rabies program team member for questions, concerns or to report an animal incident.

More information about bats...

CDC Reports: Most bats do not have rabies, but among the human rabies infections recently reported in the US, 70% were related to bat exposures.



There are 15 bat species that call South Carolina home. Visit dnr.sc.gov/wildlife/bats to learn more.



Caution!

A bat that is active by day, found where bats are not usually seen, or is unable to fly may be rabid.

Do not handle with bare hands!

Visit dph.sc.gov/bats to learn how to safely capture a bat.



Bats are generally nocturnal animals that prefer to roost during the day in isolated, naturally occurring crevices of caves, cliffs, and tree hollows, but they can also be found in attics, roofs, walls, unfrequented buildings, etc.

Because bats have small teeth, people, especially children, may not realize when they have been bitten by a bat.



Bat contact/exposure should be considered when:

- You wake up to find a bat in a room.
- A bat is found where children, pets, or persons with impaired mental capacity (intoxicated or mentally disabled) have been left unattended.
- Direct contact with a bat to a person or pet.

Steps to Prevent Bats from Entering a Building

Take these steps to minimize potential rabies exposures from bats in your home or property, including vacation rentals and part-time residences:

1. Contact a local Wildlife Control Operator to inspect your home. Visit dnr.sc.gov/wildlife/control.html to find your nearest Wildlife Control Operator.
2. Carefully examine your home for holes, and seal any openings larger than a quarter inch.
3. Seal electrical and plumbing holes.
4. Ensure all doors to the outside close tightly.
5. Cover outside entry points in attics and buildings.
6. Consider sealing each gap created by the barrel shape of terracotta roofing tiles.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

- Visit cdc.gov/rabies/prevention/bats.html for tips on how to prevent bats from entering your property.
- Contact information for your local Public Health office is available at dph.sc.gov/RabiesContacts.
- Contact a rabies team member anytime at (888) 847-0902 (Option 2).