



RABIES
is
DEADLY!



Report

on raccoon rabies
surveillance operations
in 2021

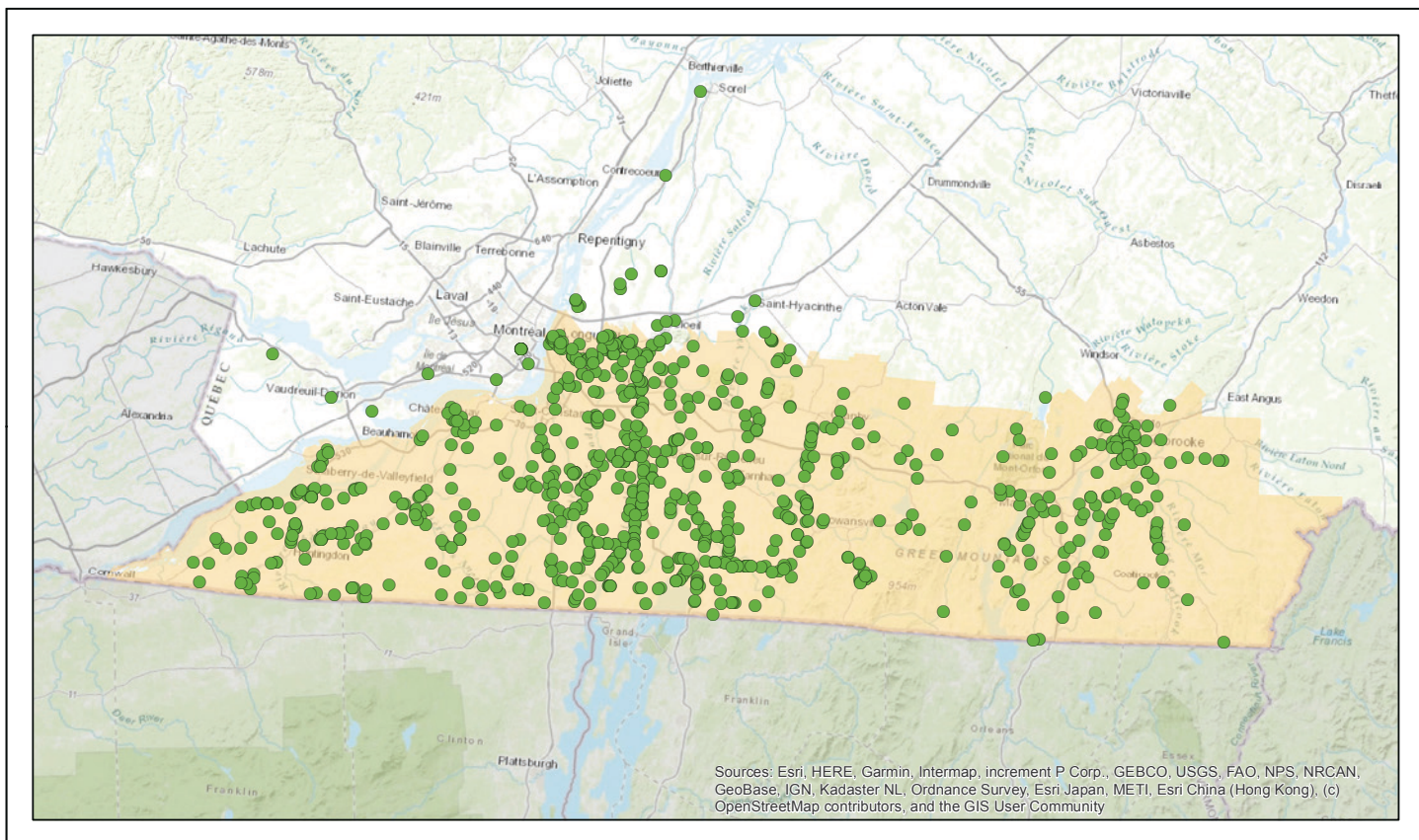
Rabies is a fatal disease that can affect all mammals, including humans.

Therefore, it is a major public health issue that warrants the maintenance of adequate surveillance in wildlife.

The enhanced surveillance of raccoon rabies in Québec is aimed at the early detection of any cases in the regions deemed to be at risk of introduction, namely Montérégie and Estrie.

This surveillance is done by collecting raccoons, skunks and foxes that are already dead or that appear disoriented, injured, abnormally aggressive or paralyzed. Laboratory tests are then performed to determine whether or not these specimens have rabies.

In 2021, the enhanced raccoon rabies surveillance area included 143 municipalities, Indigenous territories and unorganized territories in Estrie and Montérégie, for a total area of 11,541 km².



Legend

- Specimens collected and tested for rabies in 2021
- Surveillance Zone - 2021

Metadata

Map projection
Lambert conical projection

Datum
NAD 83

1:1 136 668

0 10 20 40 km

Sources of geographic information
BDTA 1:250 000 MERN
BDGA 1:1 000 000 MERN

Production
Ministère des Forêts, de la Faune et des Parcs
Service de la conservation de la biodiversité
et des milieux humides
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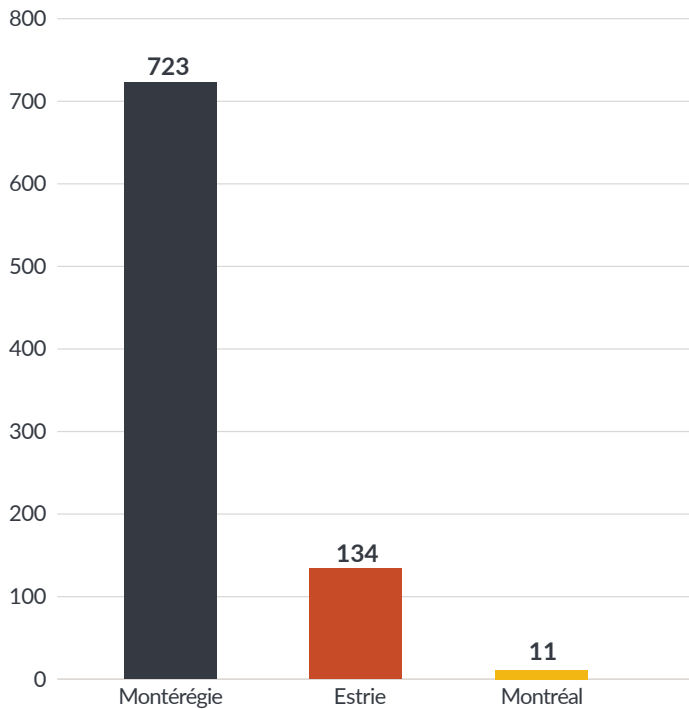


Québec

Map: Distribution of specimens collected for raccoon rabies surveillance in Québec between January 1 and December 31, 2021.

N.B. Occasionally, specimens reported outside the surveillance area are collected, when they are of interest for rabies surveillance.

Surveillance operations, conducted throughout the year, resulted in the collection and analysis of a total of 868 wild animals (sick or dead). This represents a 26% decrease from 2020 when 1,175 specimens were collected. The number of specimens collected per year generally fluctuates between 700 and 1,200.



Number of specimens collected by region, as part of raccoon rabies surveillance in 2021.



Audrey Crevier pour le MFFP

A REPORT DOES NOT ALWAYS LEAD TO THE COLLECTION OF AN ANIMAL.

Here are some examples:

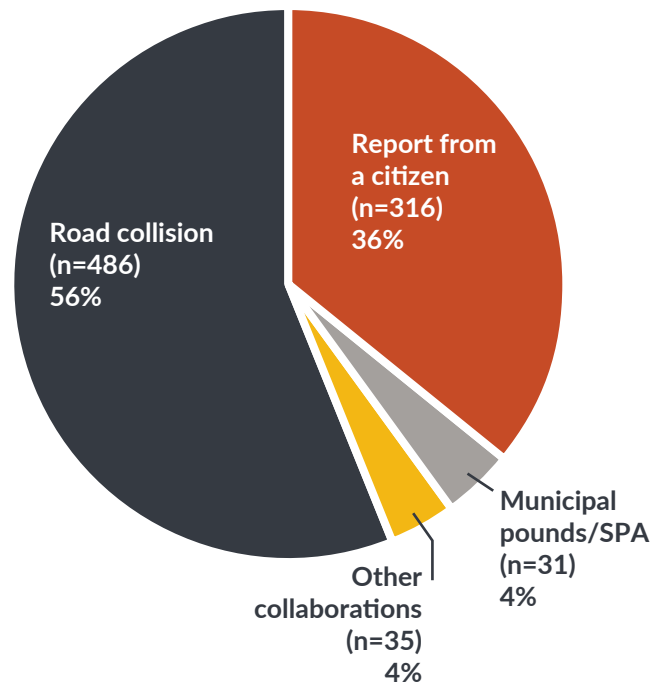
- An animal that is no longer available for collection;
- An animal not found in one of the targeted municipalities;
- An animal that does not have signs consistent with rabies;
- An animal that is not a target species;
- A dead animal that is too decomposed to perform rabies testing;
- A nuisance animal.



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COLLECTED ANIMALS AND TEST RESULTS

The animals collected as part of enhanced surveillance measures come from two main sources: reports from citizens and road collisions. Reports from citizens are the best way to find wildlife infected with rabies. When this disease is present in an area, wild animals are observed with strange behaviour, without fearing humans and even during the day, which is contrary to the habits of many species.



Source of the 868 specimens collected in 2021.

REPORTS FROM CITIZENS

We received a total of 829 reports in 2021, which represents a decrease of 26% from 2020, when reporting was particularly high. Generally, between 500 and 1,200 reports are received and processed each year. Among the reports received in 2021, 316 led to the collection of a suspect animal, which represents 38% of the reports.

TEST RESULTS

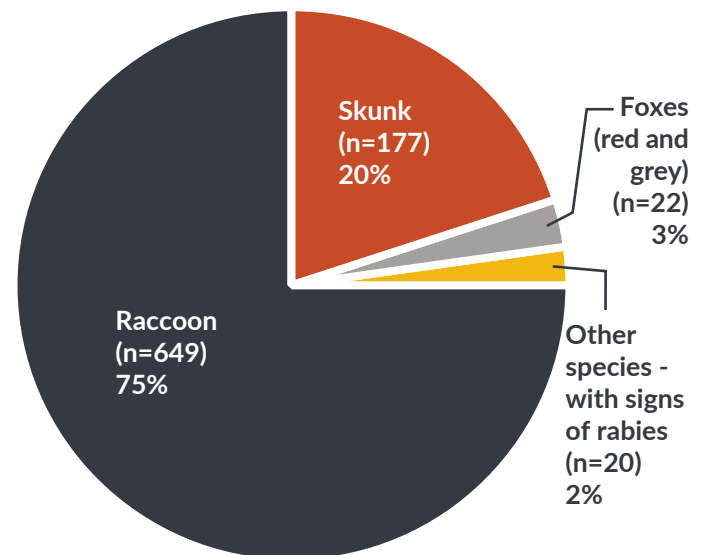
No cases of raccoon rabies were detected in Québec in 2021.

Enhanced surveillance did, however, detect a skunk with bat variant rabies, which differs from the raccoon variant. This skunk, found in Chambly in September 2021, was reported by a citizen. Fortunately, this rabies variant in a skunk does not pose a risk of developing an outbreak of rabies in wildlife. That is why this discovery did not lead to wildlife vaccination operations in 2021.

The rabies test results are as follows:

- 845 negative specimens;
- 22 inconclusive or non-sampled specimens (over-decomposed carcass, crushed carcass, or unfit sample).
- 1 positive skunk (bat variant).

Enhanced surveillance focuses on raccoons, skunks and foxes that are considered to be the most at risk species. Occasionally, other species may be collected if they show signs consistent with rabies.



Distribution, by species, of the specimens collected in 2021.