

COUNTY OF



ALLEGHENY

RICH FITZGERALD
COUNTY EXECUTIVE

July 21, 2022

Dear Borough/Municipality Manager:

Over the past 20 years, there has been a significant reduction in human and pet exposures to the rabies virus throughout Allegheny County. This is largely due to the efforts of the rabies vaccination program for wild raccoons, spearheaded by the United States Department of Agriculture's Wildlife Services (USDA), in partnership with the Allegheny County Health Department (ACHD). This year, employees and volunteers from both organizations will be distributing vaccine-containing baits from **July 25th through August 31st** across Allegheny County.

The baits will be being delivered both by hand from ground vehicles and by aircraft, including helicopter and fixed wing airplanes. The aircraft will be flying low over residential area and at times, residents may see aircraft moving slowly over the same area repeatedly within a short period of time. As this could be alarming if the residents are unaware of what is happening, we are asking the municipalities to join us in getting the word out about the baiting and when it will be happening in an effort to minimize upset to the public. Hand baiting will occur from August 1st through August 5th.

Please see enclosed flyer for images of what the baits look like. There are two different vaccines you could see- a packet coated in fishmeal, or a packet coated in a sweet, waxy coating, all of which are attractive to raccoons. The scent attracts the raccoons who consume the bait and vaccine, resulting in the development of antibodies to the rabies virus.

The risk of adverse effects to humans and animals due to exposure to the vaccine is minimal, but we urge the public to avoid contact with the bait if possible. If a stray bait must be moved, it should be picked up using rubber or latex gloves or a shovel. **We are also asking the public to keep their dogs on a leash, indoors, or confined to their property as much as possible during baiting and the week after.**

In years past, we have specifically had problems with off-leash dogs consuming the baits in parks. Parks are common raccoon habitats and are therefore important areas to bait. This interferes with their intended purpose and concerns and upsets citizens. A sign informing the public of this information that can be posted in parks can be found at: www.alleghenycounty.us/raccoon.

We are requesting that you help us to publicize the baiting effort in municipal newsletters, publications, and on social media with the educational materials attached and found on our website here: www.alleghenycounty.us/raccoon. We also request that you inform your Emergency Management Coordinator.



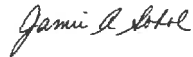
DEBRA BOGEN, MD, FAAP, FABM, DIRECTOR
ALLEGHENY COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT
542 FOURTH AVENUE • PITTSBURGH, PA 15219
PHONE (412) 687-ACHD (2243) • FAX (412) 578-8325
WWW.ALLEGHENYCOUNTY.US/HEALTHDEPARTMENT



If you need further information or would like more physical copies of the printed materials, please contact me, Jamie Sokol, ACHD Rabies Baiting Project Manager, via email at jamie.sokol@alleghenycounty.us or at 412-350-4046. Please let me know if your municipality is planning an activity such as a Community Day during the baiting periods so that we can avoid placing the baits within the celebration area.

We appreciate your continuing cooperation and thank you in advance for helping us to spread the word. Through this effort, we hope to reduce the likelihood of a human case of rabies in Allegheny County and surrounding areas.

Sincerely,



Jamie Sokol
ACHD Rabies Baiting Project Manager

Enclosures



June 1st, 2022

United States
Department of
Agriculture

Wildlife Services
4820 Route 711
Suite A
Bolivar, PA 15923
724-238-7320

The USDA, APHIS, Wildlife Services, National Rabies Management Program (NRMP) will be conducting an Oral Rabies Vaccination (ORV) program for raccoons in Ohio, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia. The ORV project will include the use of fixed wing-aircraft and helicopters to distribute baits. The fixed-wing distribution will occur over mostly rural areas while the helicopter distribution will occur over suburban/urban areas.



The NRMP will be utilizing agency-owned helicopters to distribute baits around the Greater Pittsburgh Area. The helicopters are Hughes OH-6 Cayuse, Jet Ranger and Airbus H120 helicopters with the following tail numbers: N5187Y, N332AB, and N58479, N250WH, N260WH, N67265, N67525, N67767, N67908, N91637. The aircraft are red with black stripes along the body. The helicopters will be

flying terrain at approximately 200 feet above ground level while distributing the ORV baits. The helicopter ORV operations will be based from the Beaver County Airport (BVI) and Allegheny County Airport (AGC), Pennsylvania. The anticipated dates of the helicopter operations are August 6th-18th, 2022. These dates could shift due to weather or circumstances beyond our control.



The NRMP has contracted with Dynamic Aviation for the use of five King Air A90 aircraft to distribute ORV. The aircraft are white with thin red and blue stripes along the body of the aircraft. As of the date of this letter, the following tail numbers have been tasked for this operation: N7199H, N72L, N75N, N75V, N7199S and N75Z. The aircraft will be flying VFR at approximately 500 feet above ground level while distributing

the ORV baits. The fixed-wing operations will be based from Youngstown Elser Metro Airport (4G4), Ohio, for areas north of Pittsburgh, and from Upshur County Airport (W22), West Virginia, for areas south of Pittsburgh. The anticipated dates of the operation are from August 18th – August 31st, 2022. These dates could change due to weather or circumstances beyond our control.

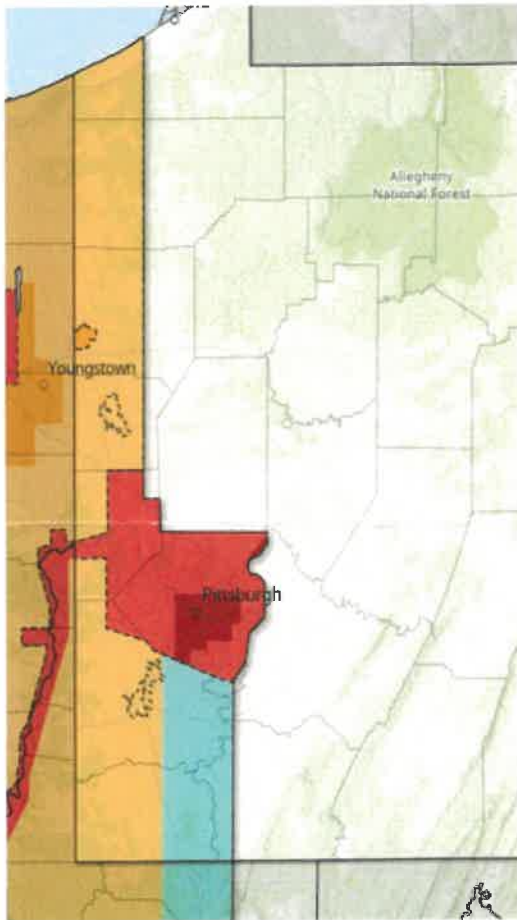
NRMP and WS pilots will coordinate all flight plans with Pittsburgh International Airport, Beaver Valley Airport, Allegheny County Airport and the FAA prior to starting the project. Flight operations will occur daily from sunrise until sunset. The pilots will be in constant communication with Air Traffic Control as well as other emergency agencies during this time.

If there are any questions regarding any of the ORV operations, please contact Rabies Biologist Amy Hess at (office) 724-238-7320 or (cell) 724-554-0618.

ORAL RABIES VACCINATION AREA

NOTICE

Cooperating Federal, State, and county agencies are conducting an oral raccoon rabies baiting project in western Pennsylvania. A vaccine packet is coated in fishmeal or vanilla which is very tasty to raccoons. The baits are dropped from low-flying airplanes or helicopters, or by local teams on foot or in vehicles. The vaccine can NOT cause rabies. This year's operation will run **July 25th thru August 31st, 2022.**



What if I find rabies baits?

Baits should be left alone – but intact baits can be moved if they are found where children and pets play. Damaged baits should be bagged and disposed in the trash.

- Wear gloves or use a plastic bag when picking up the baits.
- Toss intact baits into a fencerow, woodlot, ditch, or other raccoon habitat areas.
- Wash your hands after any skin contact with a bait.

What if my pet eats a bait?

- A few baits are not harmful, although eating a lot may cause vomiting or diarrhea.
- Do not risk getting bitten by taking a bait away from your pet.
- Confine your pet for a couple of days and check the area for more baits.
- If your pet eats a bait, avoid your pet's saliva for 24 hours, and wash skin or wounds that may have been licked.

For information about the oral rabies baiting program, contact:

USDA Wildlife Services: 1-866-487-3297
PA Department of Agriculture: 1-717-772-2852
PA Department of Health Information Line: 1-877-PA Health
Erie County Department of Health: 1-814-451-6700
Allegheny County Department of Health: 1-412-350-4046

For information concerning accidental contact with baits, call 1-888-461-0223.