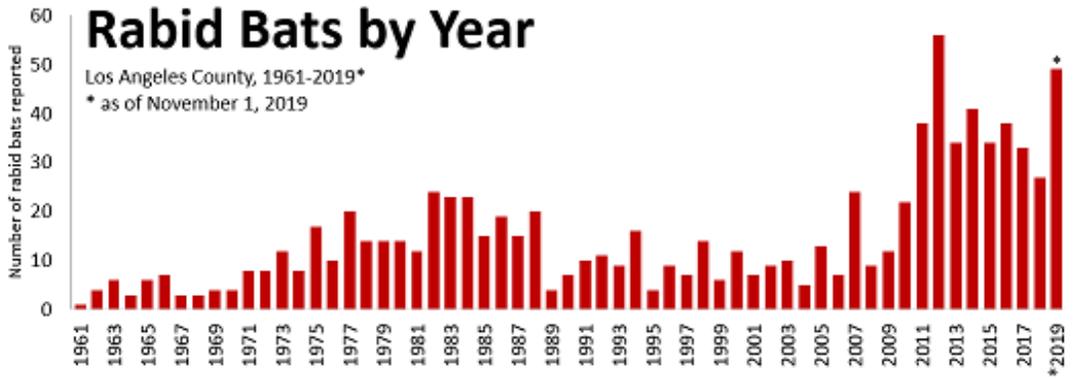


Bats and Rabies in Los Angeles County - 2019

Reported rabid bats are generally increasing over the past decades.

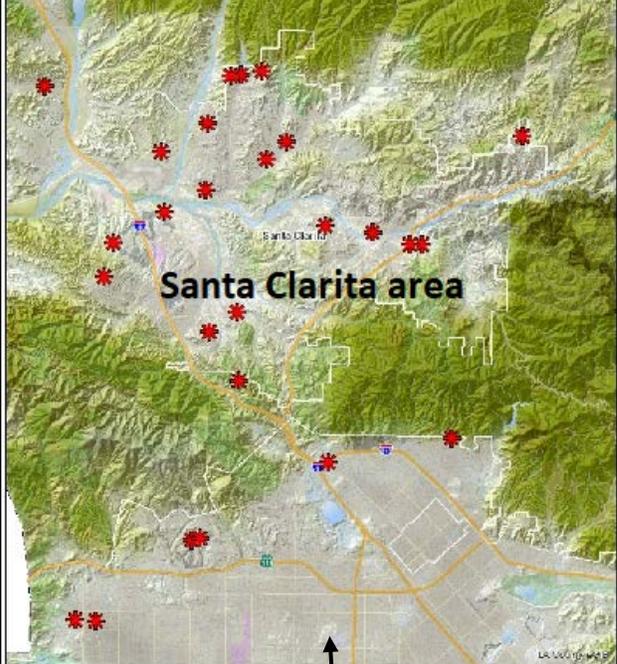
50 rabid bats found in LAC in 2019!



Reported Cases of Bat Rabies, by location where found, Los Angeles County, Jan - Nov 6, 2019

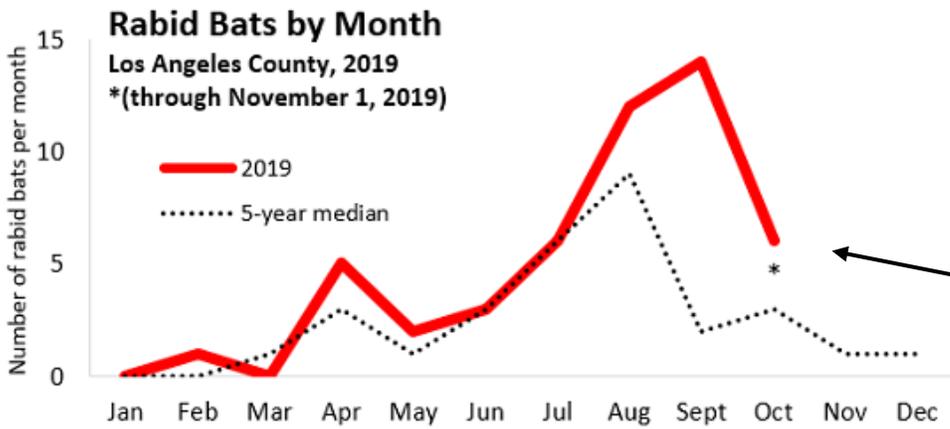


Reported Cases of Bat Rabies, by location where found, Los Angeles County, Jan - Nov 6, 2019



Approximately 1/3 of all rabid bats in LAC are found in the Santa Clarita area.

Increased numbers of rabid bats are found in the summer to early fall.



For up-to-date information about rabid bats in LAC visit: <http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/vet/>

Bat Exposures to Humans and Animals

Why are bats so important in terms of rabies?

Bats are the number one source of rabies in Southern California. An encounter with a bat (finding one inside your house or handling one with bare hands) poses a high risk of contracting rabies in LA County. Pets may also play with or get bitten by bats and contract the disease – then risking the family or humans around that pet. Bat teeth are also very small and a bite may go unnoticed if someone is sleeping or incapacitated. Children may not always report that they found and/or touched a bat. The majority of deaths from rabies in the USA are caused by bat bites and exposures, particularly when a bat is inside the house and a bite was never reported.

I received a call that a bat was found inside the house but appears healthy, should I let them release it?

No. A bat inside a house is a high rabies risk. You cannot tell if a bat has rabies just by observing it. Bats have very small teeth and bites are not always noticeable. Sleeping or incapacitated people or children may not be woken by a bat bite. A full interview should be completed to identify all persons or animals that could have been exposed. The bat should be safely collected by animal control and submitted to VPH for testing. If the bat is rabies negative then no further treatment is needed. If the bat is rabies positive, all people exposed will need rabies treatment, and all animals in the house will need to be quarantined. If rabies treatment is not started in a timely manner, the disease can be fatal.

The bat was found dead outside of the house. Should the person just throw it away?

No. All bats that could have had exposure to people or animals or that are acting abnormally (out during the day time, not moving away from people/animals, sitting on the ground, found dead) should be collected by animal control and submitted to VPH for testing.

How should I handle a bat?

Never handle a bat with bare hands. Use tools, thick gloves or objects to safely move a bat into a box/bucket with a lid. After impounding it at the shelter, +/- humane euthanasia, package it up properly and place it into the VPH fridge immediately. Bats that are not properly refrigerated may be too decomposed for testing.

Should all bats that people find be tested?

If a bat is outside and acting normally (flying, active at night) and did not have exposure to humans or animals, it does not need to be tested. Bats are protected wildlife and should not be harassed or harmed. Bats have roosts where the babies reside until they can fly away and leave the roost (usually in October). Often times, bats will roost in a tree or small opening around a house. Bats should never be exterminated since it is illegal to harm them. Instead, if bats are roosting around a home or business, a professional bat exclusion service should be used to exclude (close off) the roosting areas after the babies have flown away. Bats found in houses and those acting abnormally (out during the day, not flying away from humans, not moving on the ground, etc) that could have exposed humans or animals should be tested. Call VPH with questions if you are not sure.