

TO: Local Health Departments Statewide, IDPH Regional Health Officers Statewide, Animal Control Agencies, Illinois Department of Agriculture, Illinois Department of Natural Resources, Animal Shelters – Control – Veterinarian

FROM: IDPH Communicable Disease Control Section

DATE: June 17, 2026

SUBJECT: **Animal Rabies Surveillance Summary for 2025**

Overview:

In 2025, a total of 3,569 Illinois animals were submitted for rabies testing to the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) laboratories and the University of Illinois Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory (VDL). There were 86 specimens unsatisfactory for testing. Of the 3,483 animals tested, 49 were direct fluorescent antibody (DFA)-positive for rabies – 48 bats and one dog. Animals testing positive for rabies from the past 10 years (2016 to 2025) are listed in **Table 1**. In 2025, the most frequently submitted animals were bats (1,640), dogs (1,069), and cats (547). The vast majority of dog and cat testing occurs at the VDL. No animals other than bats, one cat, and one dog* have tested rabies-positive in Illinois in the past 10 years. However, total wildlife testing counts are low and so wild mammals (excluding small rodents, rabbits, and hares) are still considered high-risk species for rabies in Illinois.

Species	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Bat	62	58	85	54	38	40	61	83	57	48
Dog	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1*
Cat	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	63	58	85	54	38	40	61	83	57	49

Table 1. Animals Testing Positive for Rabies in Illinois, 2016-2025

* Repeat testing at outside laboratories could not confirm or invalidate the original positive rabies result. This sample was treated as positive with follow-up action taken on potential exposures to other animals and people.

Bats:

Bats are the main species of concern for rabies in Illinois. 1,601 bats were tested for rabies in Illinois in 2025. Of those tested, 1,552 were negative, one was inconclusive, and 48 bats tested positive. An additional 39 bats were submitted to IDPH laboratories but were unsatisfactory for testing. Three percent of bats tested last year (2025) in Illinois were rabies positive (**Table 2**). Rabies positive bats were identified in 20 Illinois counties last year (**Fig. 1**).

Negative	Positive	Inconclusive	Total Tested	Percent Positive
1,552	48	1	1,601	3%

Table 2. Bat Testing Results in Illinois, 2025

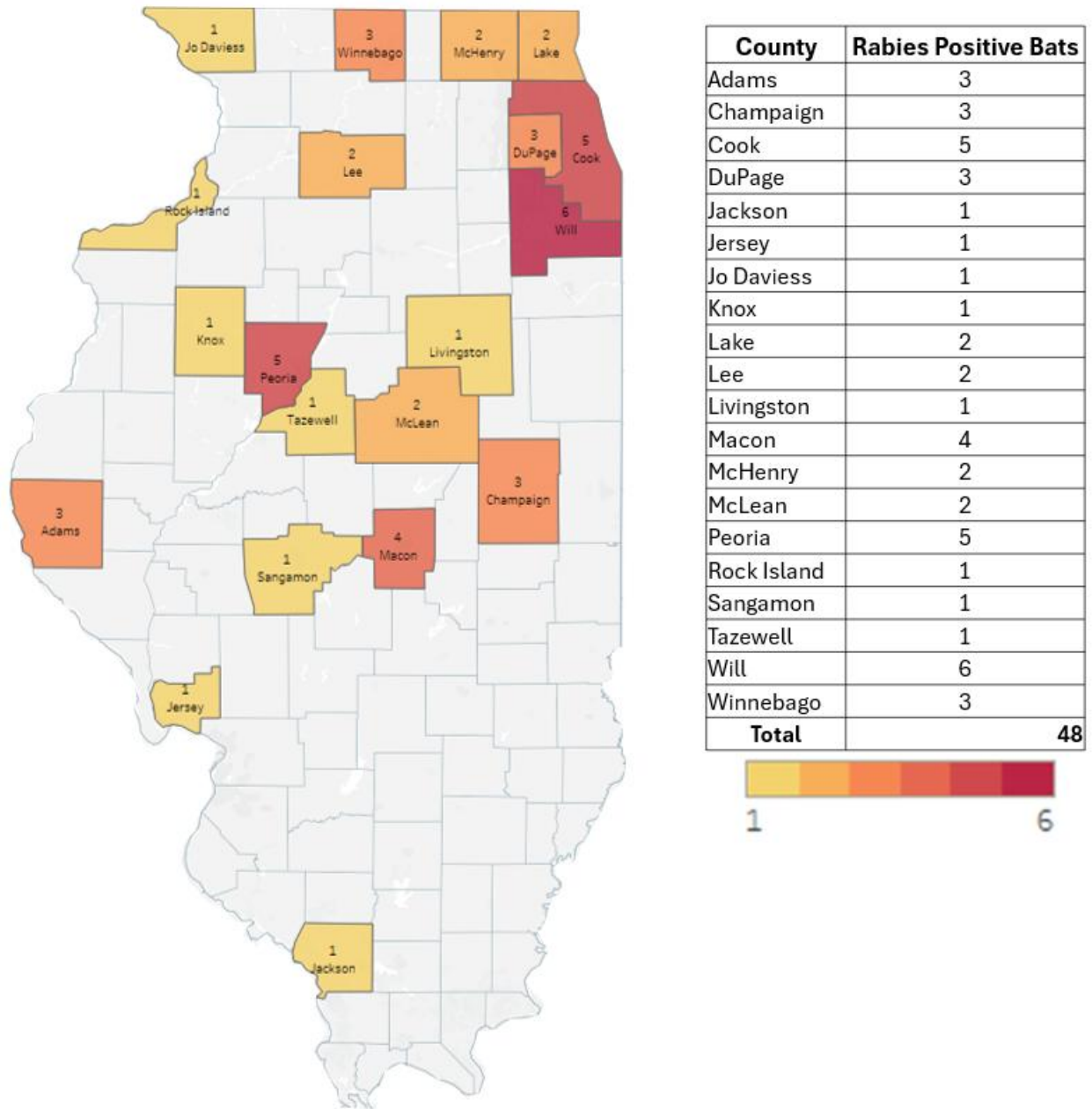


Figure 1: Map of Rabies Positive Bats by Illinois County in 2025

The majority of bat rabies testing occurred in August when bats are very active and more likely to come into contact with humans or pets. The highest percent positivity for bat rabies testing occurred in October, in keeping with other recent historic trends. **(Figures 2 and 3)**

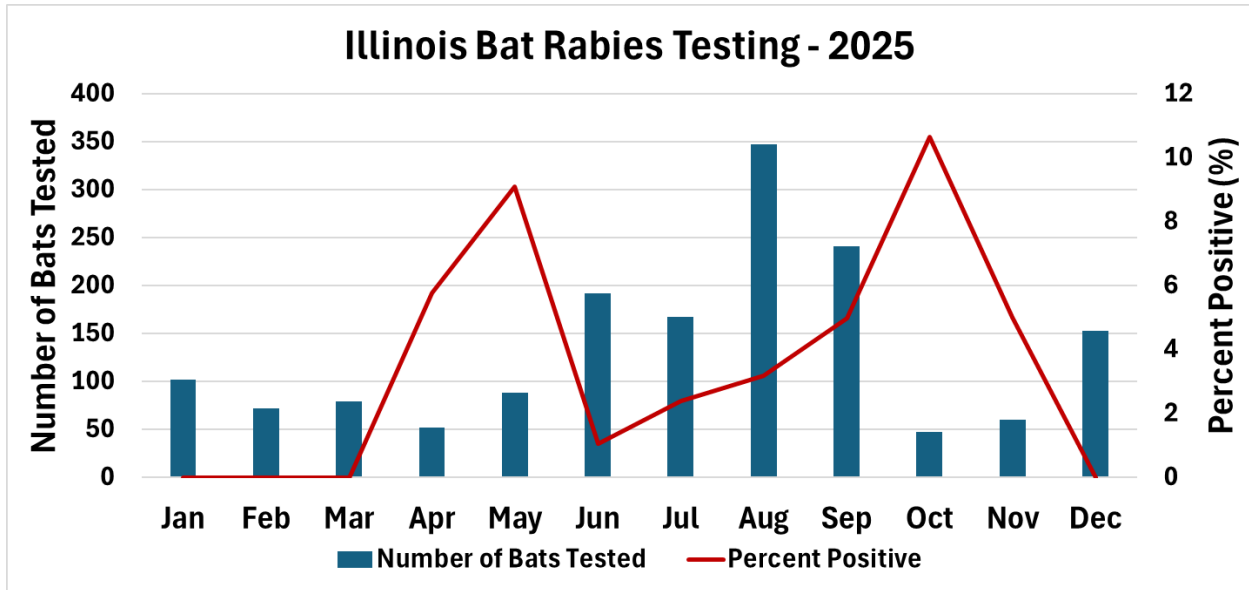


Figure 2. Number of Bats Tested for Rabies (left axis) and Percent Positivity (right axis) in Illinois in 2025.

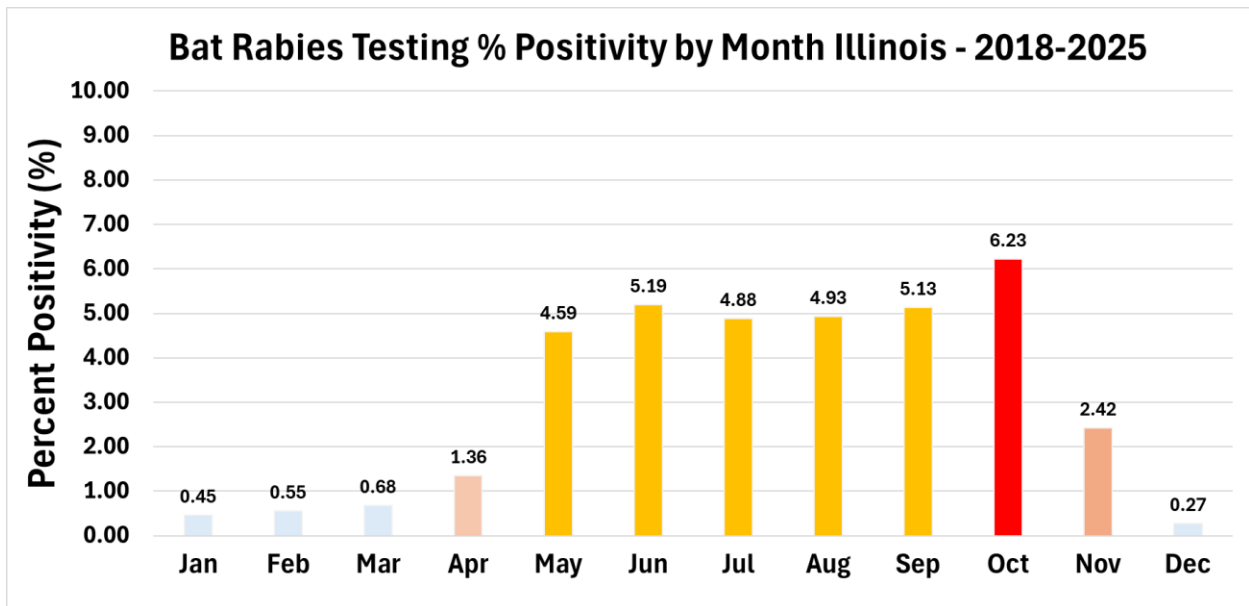


Figure 3. Illinois Bat Rabies Testing Percent Positivity by Month from 2018-2025.

Wild Animals

In 2025, no wild animals, other than bats, tested positive for rabies. Of the 3,483 animals tested, there were 99 raccoons (2.84%), 38 skunks (1.09%), 16 squirrels (0.46%), and 14 opossums (0.40%).

Please share this memorandum with your veterinary and animal control partners. We appreciate all the rabies control and prevention efforts by local animal control, veterinarians, physicians, and public health professionals.