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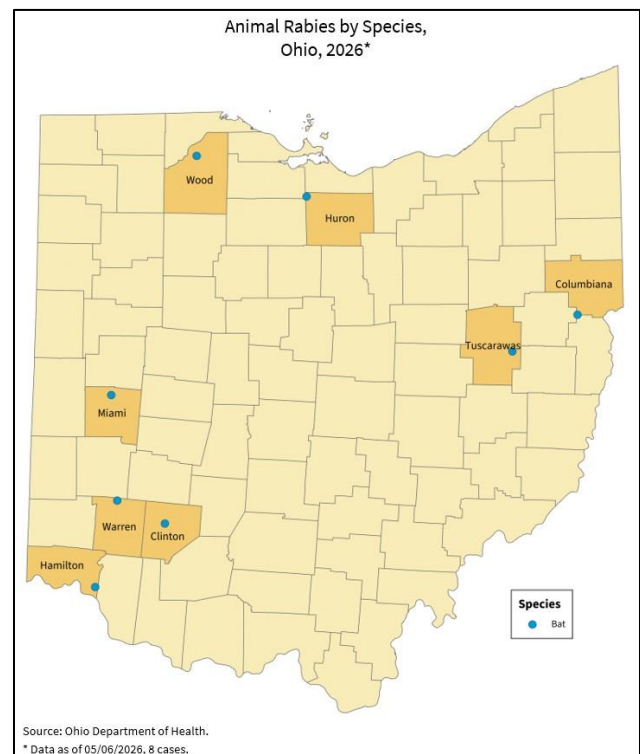
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May 12, 2026

Huron County Public Health Confirms Bat Tests Positive for Rabies

NORWALK, Ohio— Huron County Public Health (HCPH) was notified on May 6 by the Ohio Department of Health (ODH) that a bat collected near a home in Bellevue has tested positive for rabies. The bat was submitted to the ODH Public Health Laboratory for testing as part of routine rabies surveillance and exposure investigation procedures. There are no known human exposures.

Finding a bat with rabies is not unusual; bat strain rabies is present throughout Ohio, with rabid bats having been identified from nearly all of Ohio's counties over the years. The map on the right depicts Ohio counties in which bats have tested positive for rabies in 2026 alone.



Nicole Marks, MPH
Health Commissioner

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What is Rabies?

Rabies is a deadly viral disease that affects the central nervous system of mammals, including humans. Once symptoms appear, rabies is almost always fatal. However, rabies is preventable with prompt medical care after an exposure. Thanks to animal vaccination programs and post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP), human rabies cases are rare in the United States, with fewer than 10 cases reported each year. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) provides more [general information about rabies](#).

How Rabies Spreads

The rabies virus is most commonly spread through the bite or scratch of an infected mammal, or when saliva from an infected animal comes into contact with the eyes, nose, mouth, or an open wound. In Ohio, bats are the most common carrier of rabies, but wildlife and domestic animals can also transmit the virus. Bat bites and scratches can be very small and may go unnoticed.

For this reason, any direct contact with a bat — or finding a bat in a room with a sleeping person, young child, or pet — should be treated as a potential exposure. The CDC has available a [clinical overview of rabies and it how spreads](#).

Prevention Tips

1. **Avoid contact with wild animals**, especially bats, raccoons, skunks, and foxes — even if they appear friendly or injured.
2. **Vaccinate pets**, including dogs, cats, and ferrets against rabies. Keep vaccinations current and consult your veterinarian about livestock vaccination.
3. **Bat-proof your home**. Seal openings larger than ¼ inch around chimneys, attics, eaves, and screens to prevent bats from entering living spaces.
4. **Teach children** never to handle wild or unfamiliar animals and to tell an adult immediately if they are bitten or scratched.
5. **Report stray or unusual-acting animals** to local animal control.
6. **Do not attempt to keep wild animals as pets**.

Local Public Health Response

HCPH is working closely with ODH to monitor rabies activity in Huron County and respond to any reported exposures. HCPH conducts rabies risk assessments, coordinates testing, and provides guidance to residents and healthcare providers on the need for post-exposure treatment.

To report a bat encounter, animal bite, or possible rabies exposure, contact HCPH at 419-668-1652 ext. 239.

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