

# Dutchess County Rabies Control Program

Region 6

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NYSPHC Fellow, Rabies Coordinator  
Dutchess County Department of Health

August 20, 2025



# About Me



## **Educational Background:**

BA in Poli Sci, International Relations and Conflict – UAlbany, SUNY

Albany Law School

MPA, Health Policy - Rockefeller College of Public Policy, UAlbany

## **Previous Work Experience:**

NYSDOH Office of Health Insurance Programs Intern

- Medicaid Redesign Initiative – Medicaid assessment tool

Rockefeller College Student Research Aide

- Public policy research

Albany Law School Health Law Clinic, Student Practice

- Wills, Medicaid /Social Security Appeals

SUNY Research Foundation Graduate Research Aide

- Anti-extremism research, US Dept. of Homeland Security

# Rabies Coordinator, Fellowship Duties

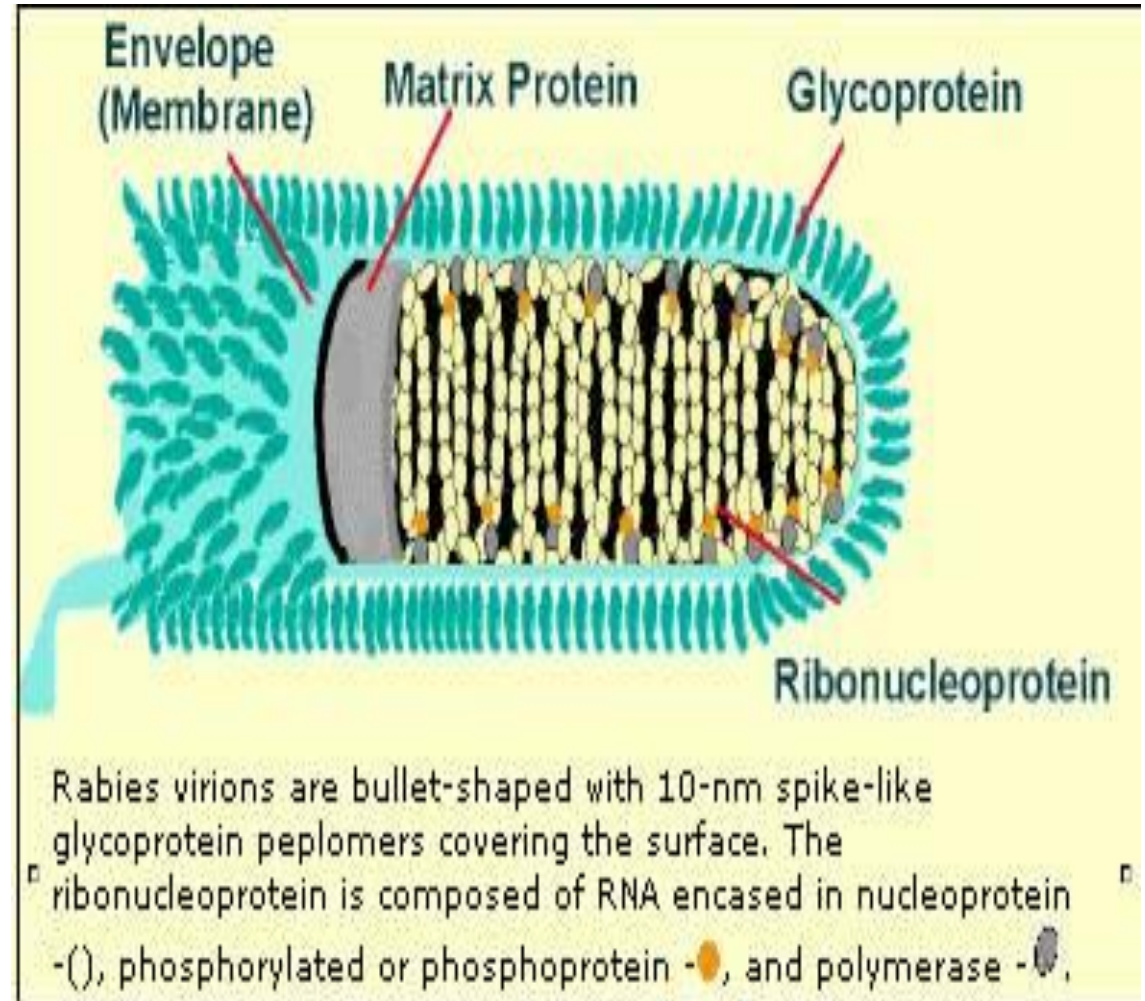
- Field most Rabies-related calls/emails/referrals
- Investigate suspected/actual rabies exposures
- Authorize/prepare specimen submission to NYS Rabies Lab (in partnership with veterinarians)
- Authorize/Recommend Rabies Post-Exposure Prophylaxis (RPEP) treatment (Rabies vaccine)
- Monitor RPEP patient treatment (in conjunction with our Nursing unit)
- Suggest and implement new Rabies program workflows/policies
- Partnership/stakeholder outreach with community members
- Educating the public about Rabies risks



# Rabies Virus Overview

## What Is It?

- Infectious disease affecting the nervous system
  - Nerves
  - Spinal cord
  - Brain
- Mammalian Virus
- Virtually 100% fatal, no treatment after symptoms present



# Rabies Virus Overview

## Transmission

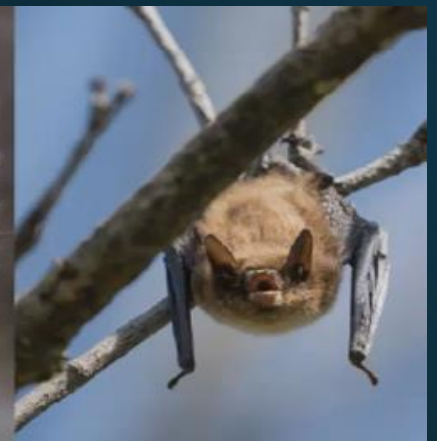
- **Most common modes of transmission:**

- Bites
- Scratches where saliva is present
- Mucous membrane/open wound exposures with saliva
- Spinal fluid
- Nervous system tissue



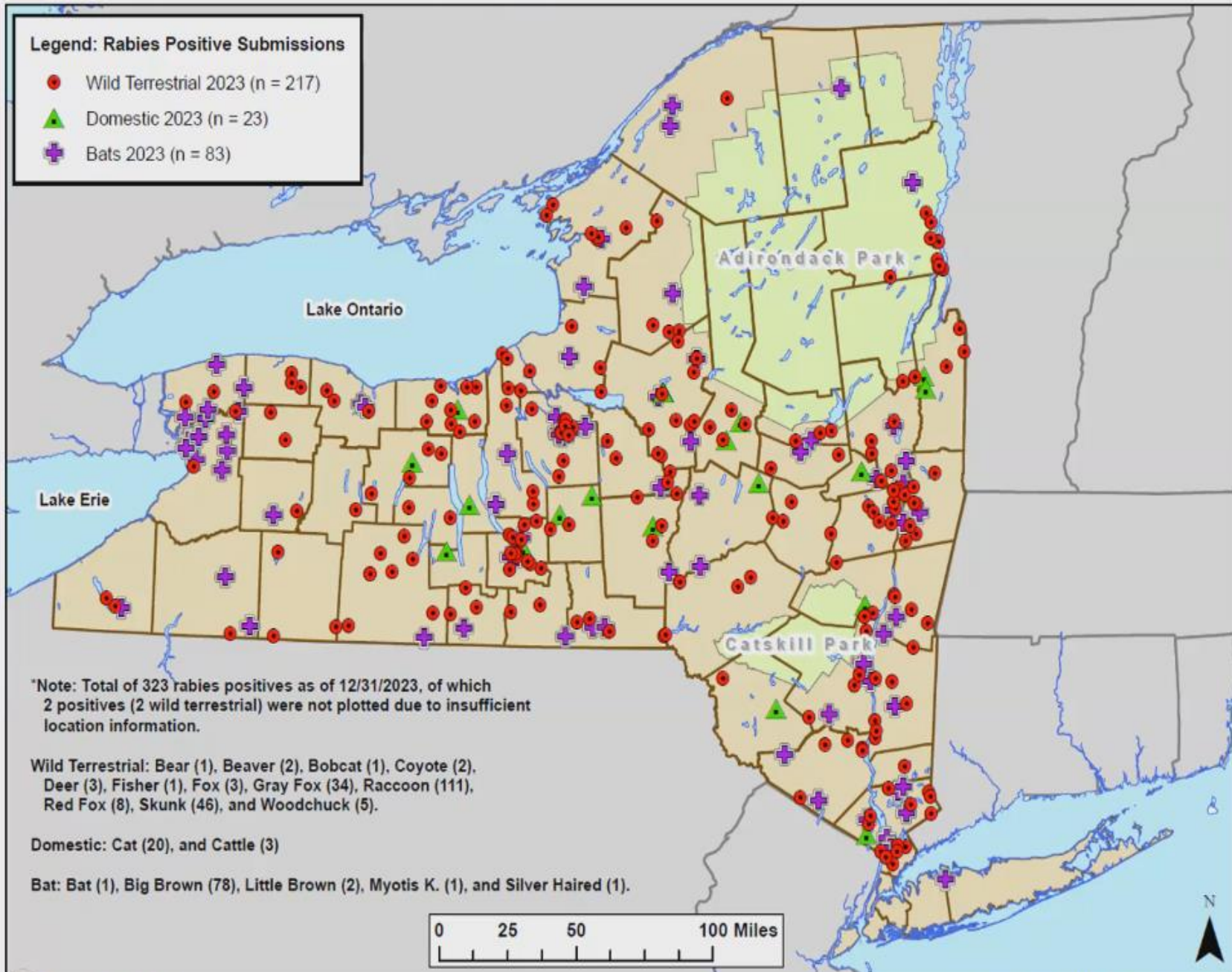
# Rabies Vector Species and Other Commonly Infected Animals

- **Four main vectors in NYS:**
  - Bats, Raccoons, Foxes, Skunks
- **Nationally:**
  - Bats, Raccoons, Foxes, Skunks, and Mongooses
- **Other encountered infected species:**
  - Coyotes, Woodchucks/Groundhogs, Feral Cats, Horses, Cattle or other farm mammals, Beavers, Opossums, Camels (yes you read that right), Sheep, Bears, Monkeys/primates

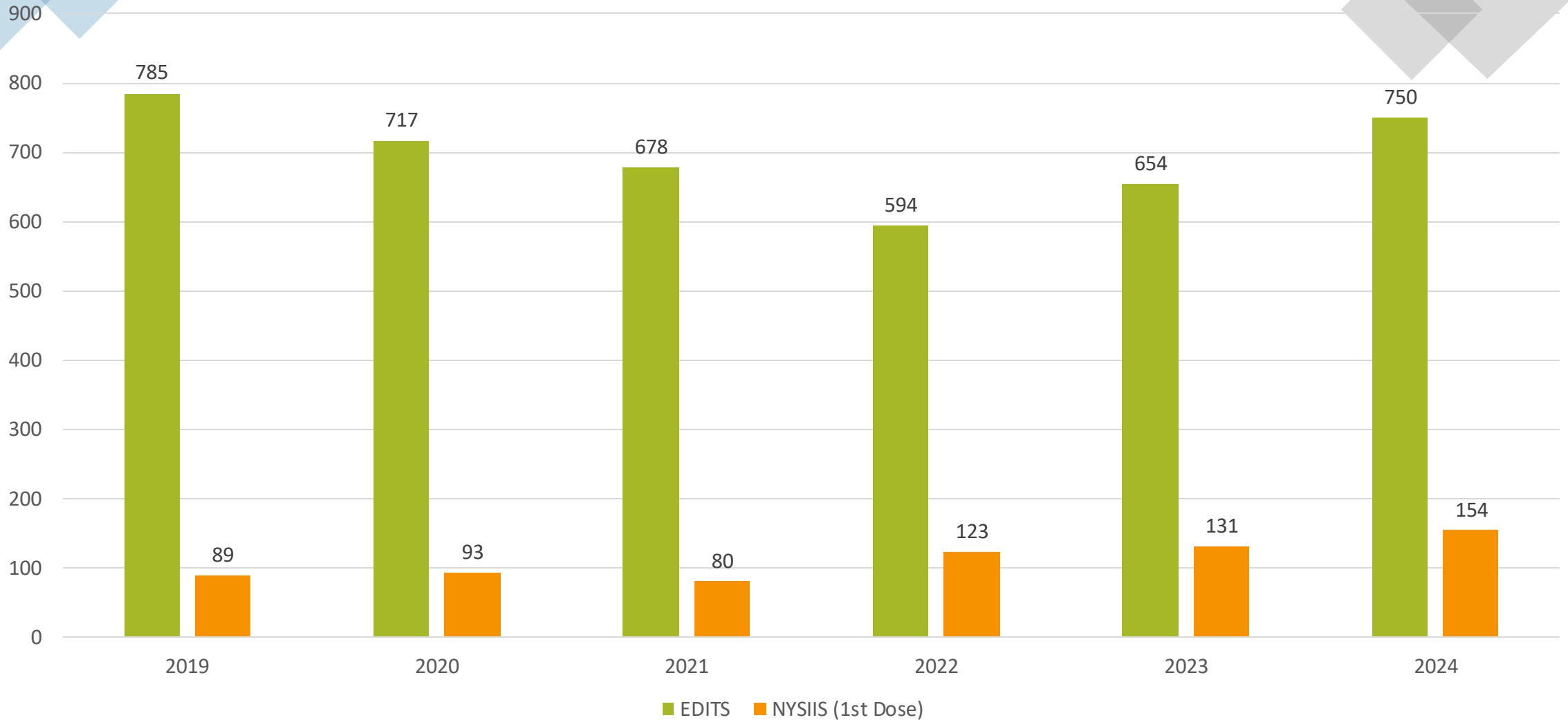


# NYSDOH Statewide Rabies Data: POSITIVE SUBMISSIONS

## 2023 Rabies Surveillance (Positive) - New York State (excluding NYC)

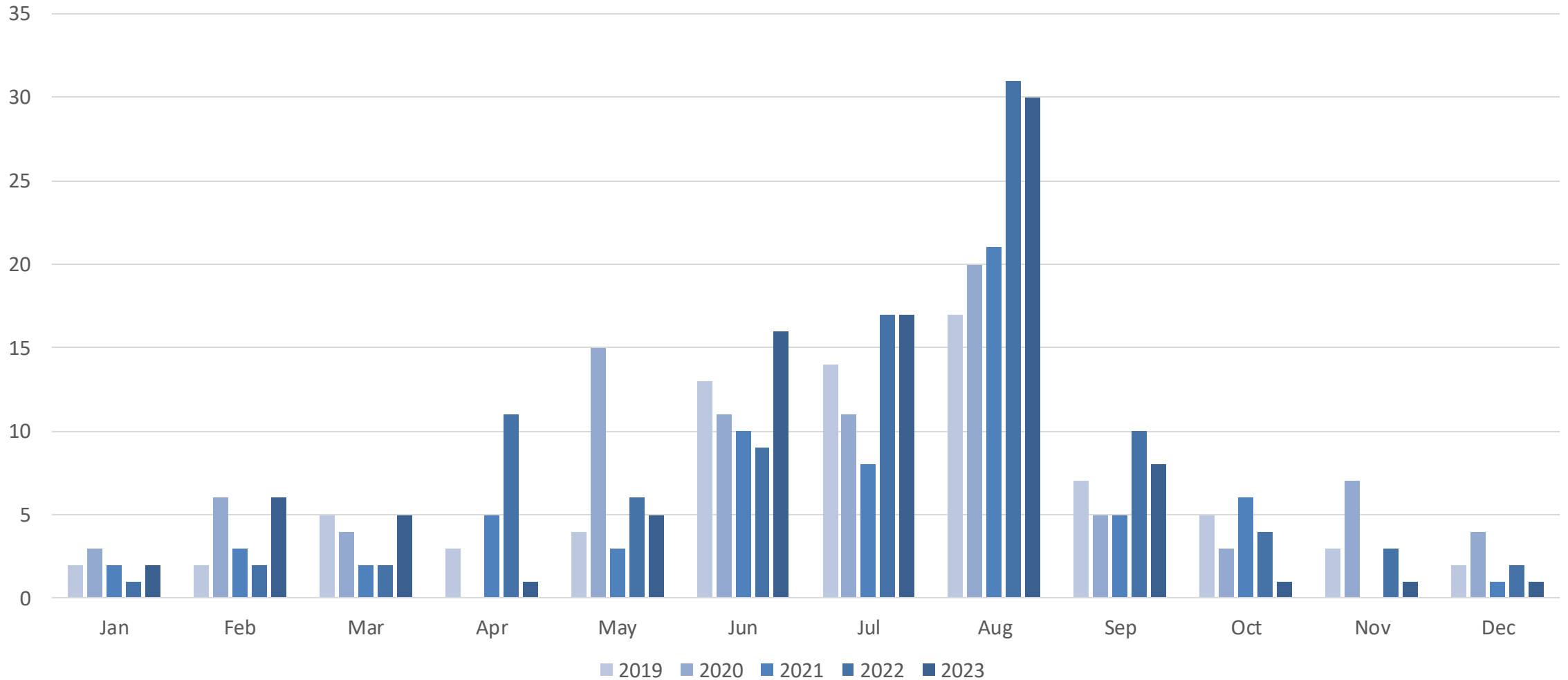


## Count of Human Records by Year Received, Dutchess County, EDITS , 2019-2024



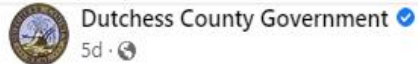
Note: EDITS is the digital case log system at DCDOH. NYSIIS is a state immunization tracking database used by medical providers to report immunizations. NYSIIS only contains records of RPEP Treatment, not all exposures. Not all rabies calls are logged into EDITS if they do not result in an exposure investigation.

## Count of Rabies Exposures per Month by Case Year, CDESS, 2019 - 2023 (n=504)



Note: 2024 Data is incomplete in CDESS at the time of this meeting (2025). CDESS Data represents RPEP patients ONLY.

# Common Fellowship Themes: Public Outreach



Dutchess County Behavioral & Community Health (DBCH) alerts residents that aggressive coyotes have been encountered in the Town of Poughkeepsie/Hyde Park area, including a coyote on the Marist College campus on Tuesday, February 7th.

It is unknown at this time if the animal is rabid. Residents are reminded to AVOID CONTACT WITH WILD ANIMALS. Do not approach and keep pets away as the wild animals may be rabid.

If there is any physical contact between a coyote and a person or pet, Report the incident to DBCH as soon as possible by calling 845-486-3404, 9 a.m.-5 p.m., Mon-Fri. Call 845-431-6465 on nights and weekends.

For more info visit: <http://dutchessny.gov/.../Public-Health-Advisory-Possible...>

## COYOTE ALERT



- Much of Rabies the program is **alerting** the public about potential exposures, bites, treatment, etc.
- **Education matters** – Rabies investigations/ treatments require urgency and appropriate timing
  - Smaller animals like Bats can be captured and tested, possibly preventing unwarranted and unpleasant vaccine experiences
- **Address fear** to ascertain the most important details
- **Countering internet misinformation**
  - Ex. Die within 24 hours, rabies-covid “variants”, “1 bite state” – we are taking your dog, etc. None of which are true.

# Common Fellowship Themes: Stakeholder Engagement

- Must involve engagement with stakeholders in all areas of public health
  - Hospitals
  - Urgent care facilities & clinics
  - Doctors' office
  - Veterinarian offices and clinics
  - NYSDEC/DOH
  - Police
  - Animal Control & SPCA
  - Members of the public, bite victims, etc.
- Develop strong relationships with each group
- Increase hospital cooperation and feedback to improve RPEP (vaccine) treatment with fewer mistakes
- Ultimate goal – protecting the public, improving patient care



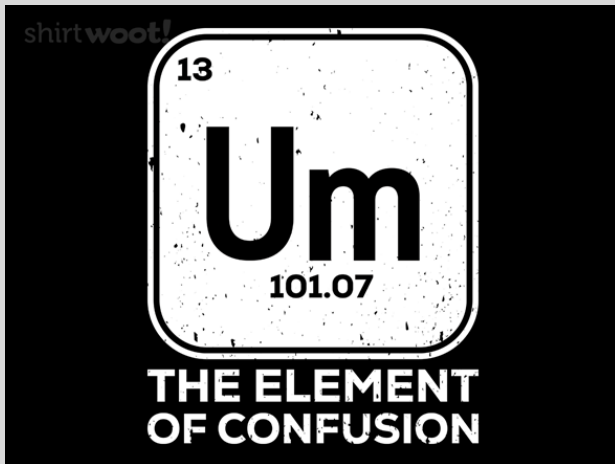


# The Best Part of the Rabies Program: The “Interesting” Cases

- Christmas “Surprise”
- Surfer meets Beaver meets relationship advice



# WHERE CAN I GET MORE INFORMATION?



- Feel free to contact me:

Matt D'Angelo

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Dutchess County Department of Health  
[mdangelo@dutchessny.gov](mailto:mdangelo@dutchessny.gov)  
845-486-2712 (Work)

- DCODH Rabies  
<https://www.dutchessny.gov/rabies>
- CDC on Rabies <https://www.cdc.gov/rabies/index.html>
- NYSDOH RPEP Algorithm  
<https://www.health.ny.gov/publications/3028.pdf>
- NYSDOH Bureau of Communicable Disease  
518-473-4439