



St. Lawrence County Public Health Department

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Press Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Oral Rabies Vaccine (ORV) Airdrop for Wildlife Populations Will Begin in Early August

Canton, NY — St. Lawrence County Public Health Department (SLCPHD) was notified that the USDA Wildlife Services will be hosting their annual Rabies Bait Drop in parts of St. Lawrence. The 2025 Fall ONRAB field assessment in NY will take place across approximately 16,600 km² (6,409 mi²) and spans portions of Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, Clinton, Erie, Essex, Genesee, Jefferson, Lewis, Niagara, Oneida, Orleans, Oswego, St. Lawrence, and Wyoming counties, NY. ONRAB has proven to be effective in ORV campaigns to eliminate raccoon rabies in Canada and to achieve local elimination in strategic areas of the eastern U.S.

In the Saint Lawrence Valley Region along the Canadian border, approximately 637,200 ONRAB baits will be distributed by fixed wing aircraft from approximately August 1st-5th, 2025. Baiting by vehicles in this region will include the distribution of 7,200 ONRAB baits in towns and cities at the beginning of August.

The bait (pictured below), which resembles a fast-food ketchup package, includes a vaccine wrapped in a plastic packet that is dipped in fish oil and coated with fish-meal crumbles to attract target wildlife. The vaccine has been proven safe when given to more than 60 species of mammals and birds.

Residents who come in contact with wildlife vaccine packets can call the USDA at (315) 857 - 4311 with questions or concerns.

- Do NOT disturb vaccine packets. Most packets are eaten within four days; almost all baits will be gone within a week. If packets are not found and eaten, they will harmlessly dissolve, and the exposed vaccine will become inactivated. If you must move a vaccine packet, wear gloves or use a plastic bag or paper towel to pick it up. Place any damaged baits in the trash; throw intact baits into a wooded area or other raccoon/wildlife habitat.
- Residents should WASH HANDS IMMEDIATELY if they come into direct contact with the vaccine or packets, then call the SLCPHD at (315) 386 - 2325.
- Supervise children's outdoor activities during bait distribution and for one week afterward.
- Confine dogs and cats indoors and observe leash laws during the bait distribution interval and for one week afterward. This will increase the probability of wildlife vaccination and decrease the chance of pets finding the bait.

ccines are not harmful to domestic animals. However, an animal may vomit if it consumes

- Residents should not risk being bitten while trying to remove bait from your pet's mouth.

Always notify your medical provider or SLCPHD if you are bitten by a pet or a wild animal. Additionally, keep your pets up to date on their rabies vaccination, and make sure your home is bat-proof.

We are pleased to announce a series of free rabies vaccination clinics. These clinics provide an opportunity for pet owners to ensure their furry companions are up-to-date on their rabies vaccinations, all at no cost. The clinic dates and locations are listed at <https://stlawco.gov/Departments/PublicHealth/RabiesControl>.

