



HEALTH DISTRICT

ANNUAL ANIMAL BITE REPORT 2025

PREPARED BY

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What is Rabies?

Rabies is a virus carried by mammal species including cats, dogs, raccoons, bats, skunks, and foxes. Rabies is often spread when an infected animal bites a healthy animal or human. Symptoms of rabies in both humans and animals include confusion, headache, fever, fatigue, hallucination, and abnormal behavior. A commonly known sign of rabies is “foaming at the mouth,” which results from the illness attacking the nervous system and causing a combination of excessive saliva production, as well as difficulty swallowing.

When left untreated, rabies is a fatal illness. This means it is very important to see a doctor immediately if you believe you may have been exposed to, or bitten by, a rabid animal. The sooner treatment starts, the better the chance of recovery. Additionally, it is safest to ensure all domestic animals that are at risk of developing rabies receive timely rabies vaccinations. In fact, all dogs and cats residing in the Portage County Health District’s (PCHD) jurisdiction are required to be vaccinated against the rabies virus before 14 weeks of age. Some people who are at risk of being exposed to rabies because of their occupation may be eligible for a rabies vaccination (ex. veterinarians). However, it is not common practice to vaccinate people against rabies.

Other things you can do to prevent rabies, besides vaccinating your pets, are:

- Do not leave any food out for wild animals. This means do not leave food out for stray animals, seal all trash bags going into outdoor trash bins, and ensure your outdoor trash bins or dumpsters have secure lids.
- Do not approach or try to pet wild animals.
- Report any wildlife you see acting strangely to Ohio Division of Wildlife by calling 330-644-2293.

Reporting and Data

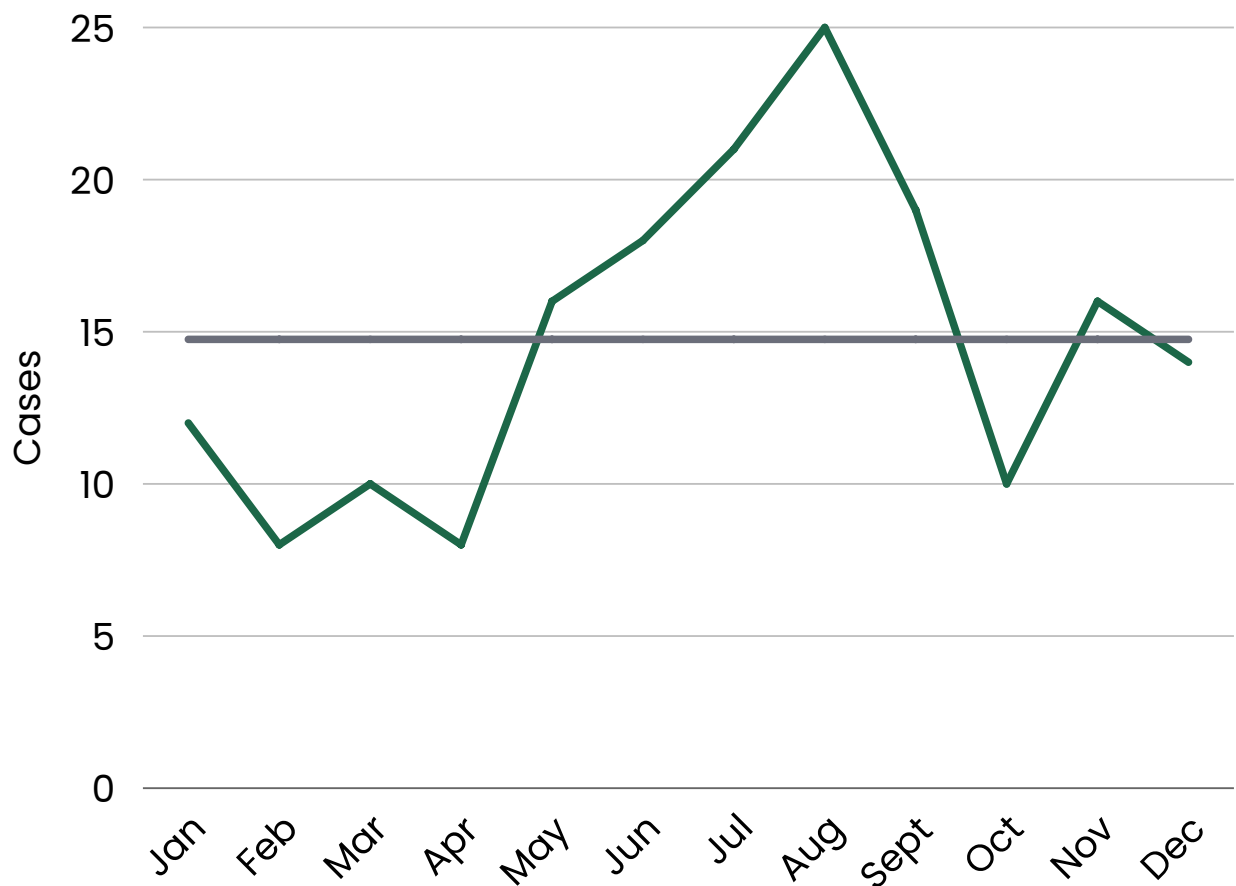
Reporting of animal bites to your local health department is mandated by law. When a bite is reported, public health agencies can help ensure that you receive proper follow-up care and resources, coordinate rabies testing of the animal that you were bitten by, and/or direct proper quarantine procedure if you were bitten by a domestic animal.

Ohio Administrative Code Rule 3701-3-28, Part A states that when an individual is bitten by a dog or other non-human mammal, it must be reported to the local health department within 24 hours. If you need to report an animal bite, please do so as soon as possible. We can be reached by phone at 330-298-4490.

All data contained in this report is from the Ohio Disease Reporting System or the Portage County Health District's Animal Bite Reporting Database. Please note that the term "case" refers to a single animal regardless of the number of individuals or animals bitten by/exposed to the animal. Fortunately, no Portage County animals tested positive for rabies in 2025.

Any questions about this report or the contents therein can be directed to Olivia Artman, the PCHD Epidemiologist.

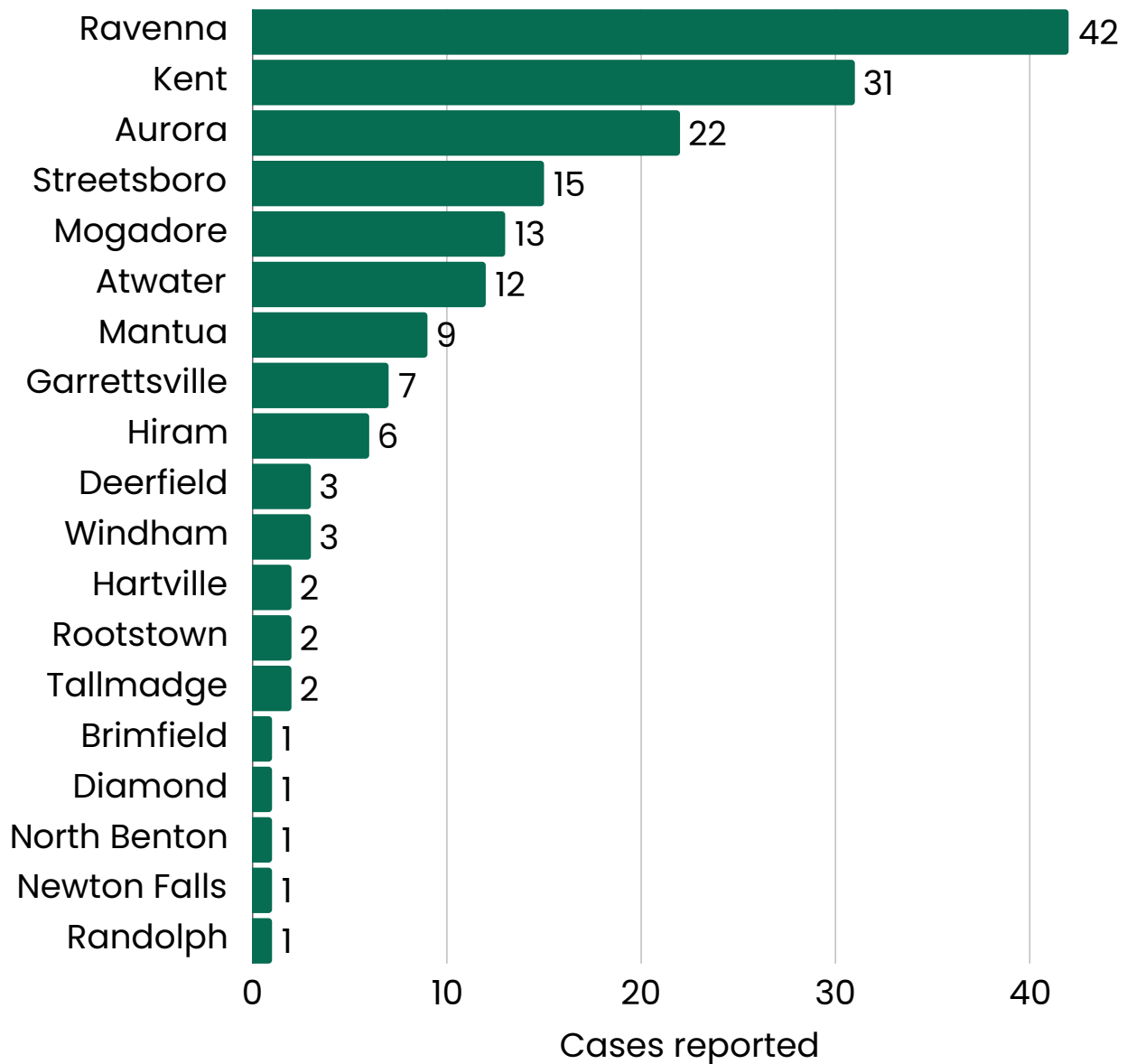
Cases Reported to PCHD by Month



2025 Total: 177 cases reported

This graph displays the number of animal bite cases reported to PCHD each month during 2025. In total, PCHD received 177 animal bite case reports. The average number of cases per month was 14.75 (thick grey line). From May to September, the monthly number of cases was consistently above average. This is likely because people and their pets are outside more often during the warmer months, resulting in more opportunities for bites to occur. Additionally, many wild mammals hibernate or become less active during the winter. However, it should be noted that animal bites were reported to PCHD every month of the year. Therefore, one should not be less diligent about rabies prevention just because it is cold outside.

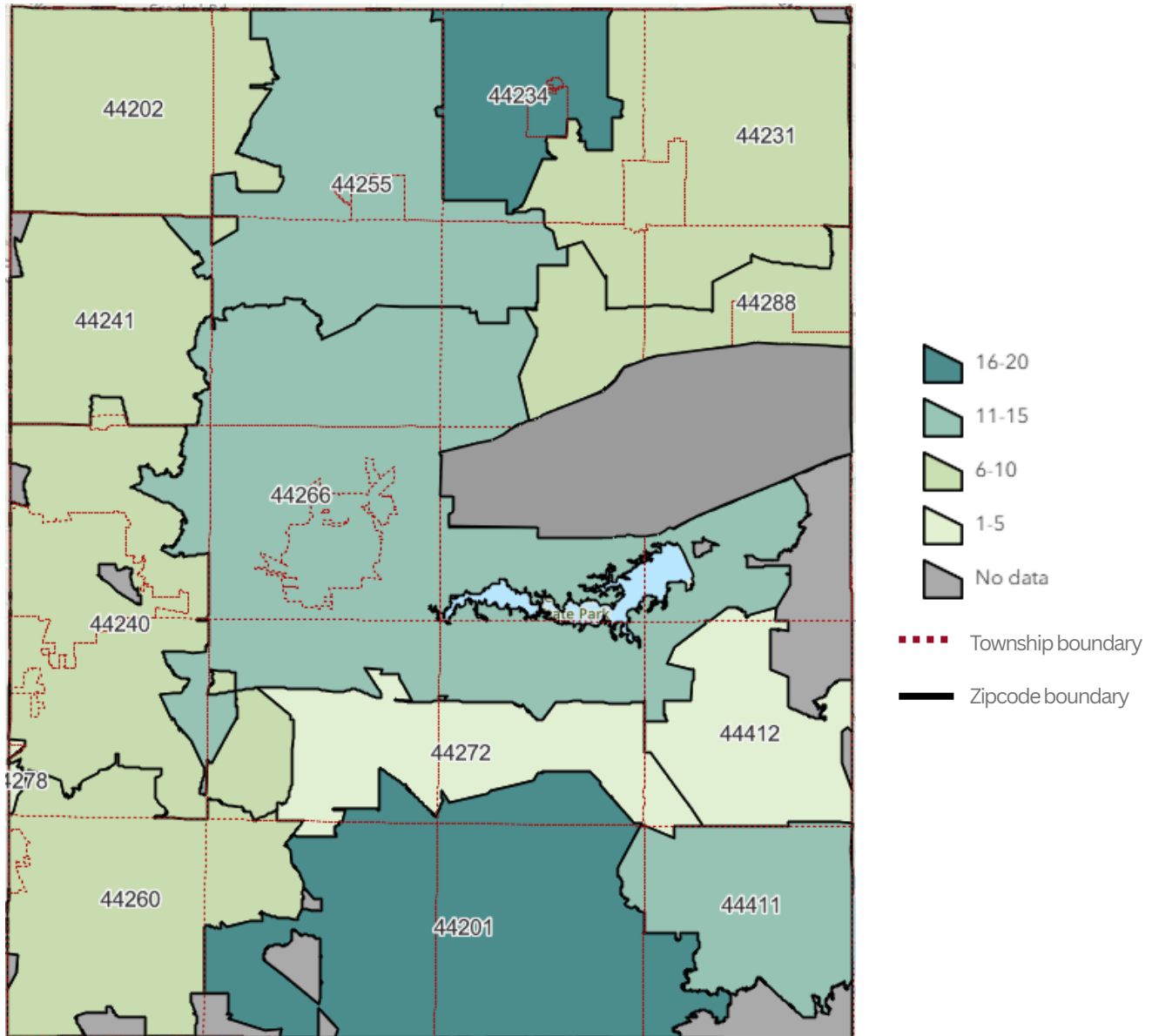
PCHD Case Reports by Location of Occurrence



3 reports had no township listed

A bar chart displaying the number of animal bite cases reported to PCHD by residents of each city/township. The number of animal bite cases in Portage County townships/cities roughly corresponds with population size. In other words, more animal bites occur where more people live. However, it is surprising that Ravenna residents reported almost double the number of exposures reported by Aurora residents, and about triple the number of exposures reported by Streetsboro residents.

Zip Code Case Rate (per 10,000 Residents)



3 reports had no zipcode listed

A map showing the animal bite case rate per 10,000 residents within each Portage County zip code. Areas with the highest case rates included Atwater and Hiram. These zip codes have fairly small populations, so even a small number of animal bite cases has resulted in an elevated rate in Hiram (six cases). However, the Atwater area zip code, 44201, has a similar number of case reports (13 cases) to Streetsboro, an area with about triple its population. This occurred in 2024 as well. Thus, the 44201 zip code may benefit from additional animal safety education.

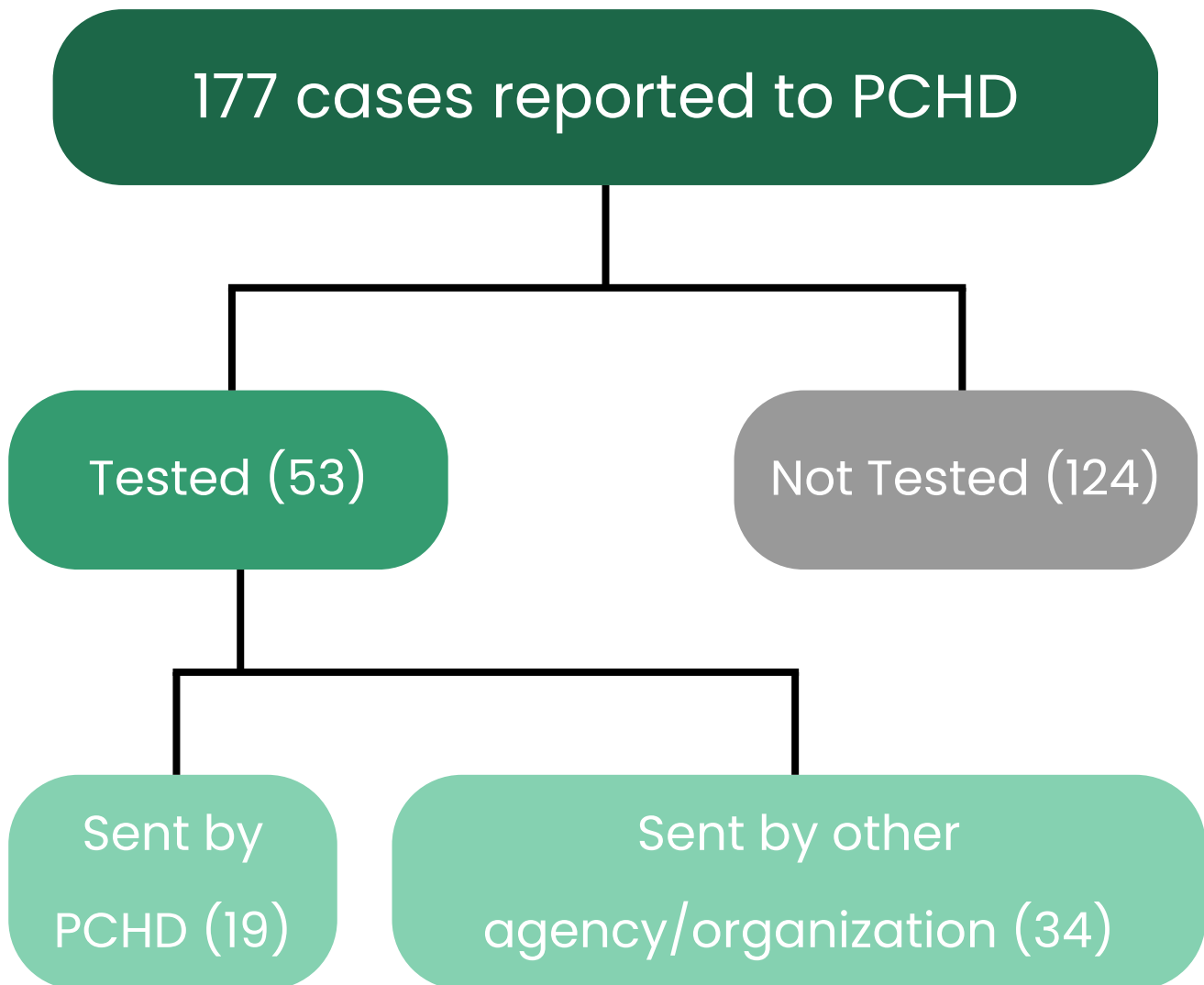
Case Reports by Species

Animal	Number of Cases	Percent of Cases
Dog	116	65.53%
Cat	35	19.77%
Bat	14	7.91%
Raccoon	3	1.69%
Rabbit	3	1.69%
Cattle	1	0.56%
Coyote	1	0.56%
Fox	1	0.56%
Muskrat	1	0.56%
Squirrel	1	0.56%

1 report had no animal species listed

This table shows the number of animal bite case reports for each type of animal. Domestic animals were responsible for most of the reported animal bites, approximately 85%. These are the animals humans encounter most frequently, so they have more opportunities to bite people.

Laboratory Testing



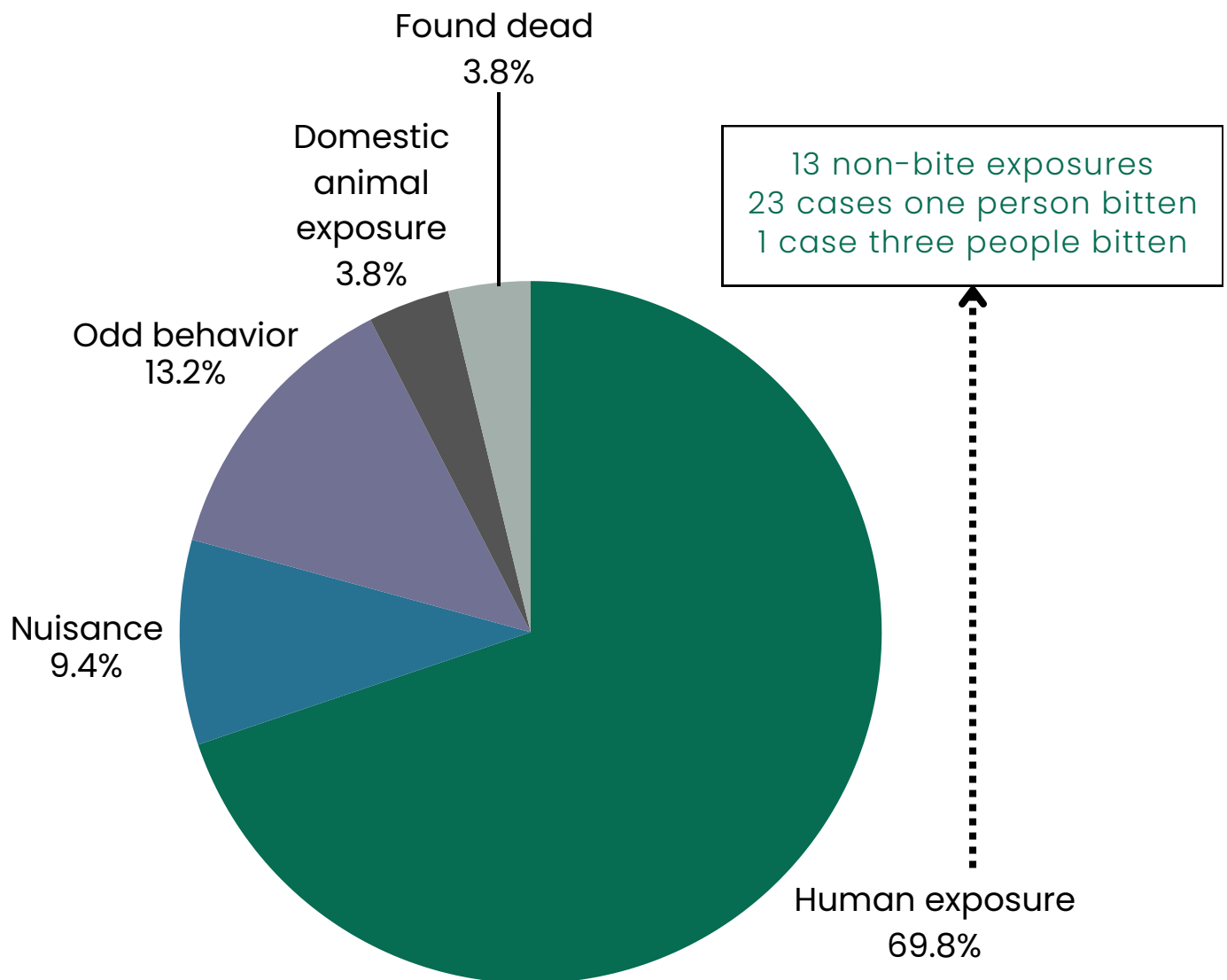
A flow chart summarizing rabies tests of Portage County animals submitted to the Ohio Department of Health (ODH) Microbiology Laboratory. Collectively, Portage County agencies/businesses (including PCHD) sent 53 animals to the ODH Microbiology Laboratory for rabies testing in 2025. All 53 were negative for rabies.

Laboratory Testing: Animal Types

Animal	Number of Cases	Percent of Cases
Bat	19	35.85%
Cat	16	30.19%
Dog	12	22.64%
Raccoon	2	3.77%
Cattle	1	1.89%
Groundhog	1	1.89%
Horse	1	1.89%
Llama	1	1.89%

A table showing the number of animals of each type submitted by Portage County agencies/businesses (including PCHD) to the ODH Microbiology Laboratory for rabies testing. The most frequently submitted type of animal was bats. This is likely due to two factors: (1) The rabies test requires euthanasia of an animal, and people can quarantine pets for monitoring after a bite rather than having them euthanized and tested and (2) You cannot feel a bat bite, so you don't know if you have been bitten by one. After bats, dogs and cats were the next most commonly submitted animals. It should be noted that while 116 dog bites and 35 cat bites were reported to PCHD, almost more cats were submitted for testing than dogs. This may reflect under-vaccination of cats, under-reporting of cat bites or a high number of stray/feral cats in Portage County.

Laboratory Testing: Test Reasons



A chart displaying the reason for rabies testing listed on laboratory submission paperwork. 37 submissions were the result of human exposures to the animal. Of those human exposures, 13 were not bites, 23 involved a single person being bitten, and one involved three people being bitten. Two submissions were the result of a domestic animal being exposed to the submitted animal (e.g. a dog being approached by a raccoon). Five submissions were the result of an animal acting as a nuisance (e.g. living under a deck, getting into a trashcan). Seven submissions were the result of an animal behaving oddly (ex. an animal is acting aggressively, foaming at the mouth). Two submissions were the result of an animal unexpectedly being found dead (ex. healthy animal dies for no known reason). As stated on page one of this report, nuisance or oddly-behaving animals can be reported to the Ohio Division of Wildlife.

Additional Information

Portage County Health District: Animal Bites and Rabies Prevention Webpage

<https://portagehealth.net/our-programs/nursing/animal-bites-rabies-prevention/>

Ohio Department of Health, Zoonotic Disease Program: Rabies Webpage

<https://odh.ohio.gov/know-our-programs/zoonotic-disease-program/diseases/rabies>

Ohio Department of Health, Zoonotic Disease Program: Rabies Post-Exposure Risk Assessment Tool

<https://odh.ohio.gov/know-our-programs/zoonotic-disease-program/rabies-pep>

Ohio Department of Natural Resources: Rabies Webpage

<https://ohiodnr.gov/discover-and-learn/safety-conservation/wildlife-management/wildlife-disease/rabies>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: Rabies Webpage

<https://www.cdc.gov/rabies/>