

OFFICE OF FISH AND WILDLIFE HEALTH AND FORENSICS
MONTHLY SUMMARY
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FISH AND WILDLIFE HEALTH PROJECT (FW-69-R13)

Wildlife Disease Surveillance and Investigations (Job W-1)

Necropsies performed:

2 mallard ducks
1 black bear
1 Great egret
1 White-tailed deer

18 histologic slides were prepared and read for 2 necropsy cases.

Since March, there have been 9 rabid raccoons in Pt Pleasant Boro and 3 rabid cats and 1 rabid raccoon in Pt Pleasant Beach. An animal control contractor contacted the wildlife pathologist to see if the many presumed rabid raccoons were in some instances canine distemper. He was advised this would be an unnecessary risk to those collecting and transporting specimens, since it is already known the two diseases may occur simultaneously and in one instance in the same animal. The last rabid cat was from 9/3 - the other 2 were in July. Ocean Co HD is trying to work with the local municipalities, but the locals are committed to the feral cat colony program and don't want to listen to the county health department. The New Jersey Health Department officials spoke to the County HD on 9/18/09 and recommended that they try to sit down with the ACO and some of the local people to see where the cat problems are and maybe trap and get rid of some of them. They had no records on the cats in the feral cat program being vaccinated against rabies, there were 2 known incidents where kids were bitten by stray cats and undergoing post-exposure-prophylaxis (PEP) - one was staying at a motel when it happened and now the town and many individuals are being sued. The cats ran away in both of these cases and were not actually diagnosed with rabies, but the NJDOH&SS recommend PEP in these cases for safety.

Also related to feral or outdoor cats is the bear cub, which was in a lethargic state in a yard in West Milford. It was captured by an ACO and died overnight in an animal carrier. The necropsy and histopathology revealed it succumbed to toxoplasmosis of the lungs and brain. This is the first such occurrence in bears although 40% have been exposed based on sero-surveys by the bear project and East Stroudsburg University. A gray squirrel die-off of pulmonary toxoplasmosis has also been diagnosed in the past in NJ. Since the Toxoplasma gondii parasite is harbored in the intestine of cats, feral cat colonies may enhance the prevalence of toxoplasmosis in wildlife. Disease hazards to wildlife are one of several reasons cited by the Wildlife Disease Association in its resolution opposing feral cat colonies.

A great egret from Polermo tested negative for WNV and EEE and was found dead with two others. It was slightly emaciated and had evidence of pulmonary hemorrhage with no inflammatory cell reaction or obvious cause. Three dead birds together and lung hemorrhage in one suggests the possibility of collision with an overhead obstruction, although this could not be confirmed in this case.

A captive white-tailed deer was submitted for necropsy on 9/15/09. The deer came from a herd held by a person in Hammonton. The person had received deer from out of state without a permit and is currently in litigation with the state. It was being treated for a pneumonic condition when it died suddenly. It had multiple extensive hemorrhagic lesions suggestive of Epizootic Hemorrhagic Disease. Spleen was submitted to Dr. David Stalknecht of the Southeastern Cooperative Wildlife Disease Study for possible EHD virus isolation and typing. Deer project and law enforcement personnel were notified to be on the lookout for symptomatic deer or deer dead near water bodies.

Suspect blue-green algae poisoning of mallards occurred at a pond in Linwood, Atlantic County in late August.

The progress report for Job W-1 of the Fish and Wildlife Health Project segment R-12 was completed and submitted to the Federal Aid Coordinator.

Wildlife Toxicology (Job W-2)

The wildlife toxicologist continued collecting tissue samples for a study of lead poisoning in raptors. Additional carcasses were picked up from the Mercer County Wildlife Center and Toms River Avian Care. During the current reporting period, liver and kidney tissues were obtained from 7 red-tailed hawks, 7 Cooper's hawk, 1 sharp shinned hawk, 3 great horned owls, 3 turkey vultures, 1 black vulture and 1 osprey. To date, tissues have been collected from a total of 166 birds.

A second batch of 40 raptor liver samples were shipped to the toxicology lab at the University of Pennsylvania School of Veterinary Medicine for lead analysis.

The annual progress report for the Wildlife Toxicology job under the Fish and Wildlife Health Project segment R-12 was completed and submitted to the Federal Aid Coordinator.

Diagnosis of Diseases in Fish (Job F-1)

The annual progress report for the Diagnosis of Diseases in Fish job under the Fish and Wildlife Health Project segment R-12 was completed and submitted to the Federal Aid Coordinator.

NON-PROJECT ACTIVITIES

The wildlife pathologist took a mandatory EEO on line training course on harassment and discrimination in the work place on August 27, 2009.

A program to calculate the time of death for deer was copied and transferred to the Central Law dispatcher.

Tissue samples from the illegal captive deer from Hammonton which died were sent to USDA-APHIS National Veterinary Services Lab in Ames, Iowa for CWD testing.

The final report for the 2008-2009 CWD survey was completed and submitted to the Federal Aid Coordinator and the granting agency USDA-APHIS-VS and deer project personnel.