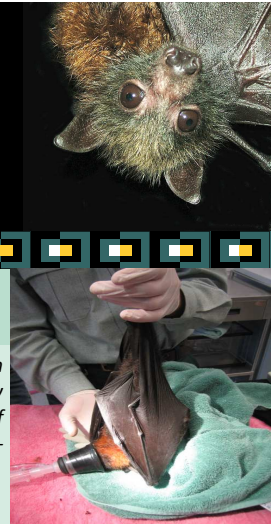


ABLV BAT STATS

ABLV Update, December 2011

Australian Bat Lyssavirus report December 2011

This report presents the latest information on Australian Bat Lyssavirus (ABLV) testing across Australia. Information has been made available by CSIRO Australian Animal Health Laboratory (CSIRO-AAHL), The Sub-Committee on Animal Health Laboratory Standards (SCAHLs), QLD Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (QLD DAFF), QLD Health, The Australian Registry of Wildlife Health, Australian Wildlife Health Network subscribers and State/Territory representatives of the Chief Veterinary Officers, and is collated by the Australian Wildlife Health Network as part of wildlife disease reporting requirements. More detailed information is available in the wildlife health information system (eWHIS), www.wildlifehealth.org.au



Positive ABLV cases for 2011

There were seven positive cases of Australian Bat Lyssavirus (ABLV) in bats reported in Australia for 2011 (Table 1). Five of the cases were from Queensland and two from Victoria.

Queensland:

Two positive cases were diagnosed in black flying foxes, *Pteropus alecto*, one case in a little red flying fox, *Pteropus scapulatus*, and one in a grey-headed flying fox, *Pteropus poliocephalus*. The other bat, a *Mormopterus sp.* had equivocal results, and as it was not possible to exclude ABLV in this case, the results are included in the dataset.



grey-headed flying fox
Photo courtesy of halleydesign.com

Victoria:

Two positive ABLV cases were reported in Victoria, both in grey-headed flying foxes, *Pteropus poliocephalus*. These are the first positive cases reported from Victoria since 2004.

The first flying fox was found on the ground with posterior paresis. The second was caught by a wildlife carer, and was reportedly vocalising unusually, and appeared agitated and distressed. There was no human contact reported in either of these cases.

Four of the five positive bats presented due to contact with the potential for ABLV transmission to humans. No further presenting signs were reported in these bats. The other bat was presented dead, however was reportedly showing respiratory signs prior to its death.

Public Health Significance

Five of the seven positive cases reported involved contact with the potential for ABLV transmission to humans.

Infected bats are debilitated and as a result are typically found on or near to the ground. This brings them closer to humans and animals, increasing the probability of contact.

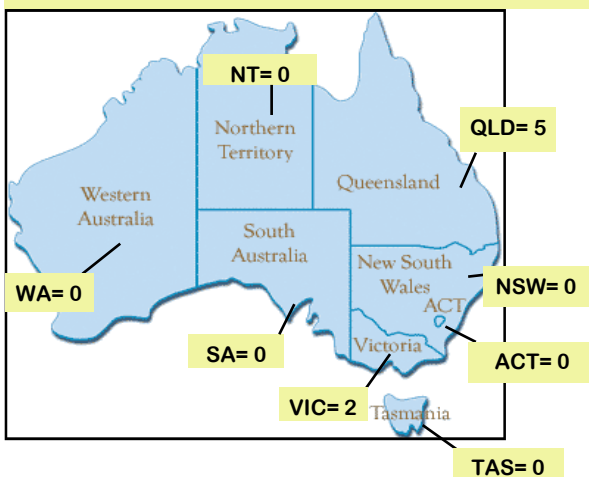
Table 1: ABLV positive cases in bats in Australia (Jan-Dec 2011)

| STATE | Jan-Mar | Apr-Jun | Jul-Sep | Oct-Dec | Total 2011 |
|--------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|------------|
| QLD | 1 | 2 | - | 2 | 5 |
| VIC | - | 1 | 1 | - | 2 |
| Total | 1 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 7 |

Table 2: ABLV cases in bats as confirmed by FAT, PCR, IHC and/or Virus Isolation[^] in Australian bats to 2011. *

| | NSW | NT | QLD** | VIC | WA | TOTALS (By Year) |
|--------------------------|-----------|----------|-----------------|----------|----------|------------------|
| 1995 | 0 | 0 | 1 [#] | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 1996 | 1 | 0 | 9 | 1 | 0 | 11 |
| 1997 | 7 | 1 | 27 | 0 | 0 | 35 |
| 1998 | 1 | 0 | 26 | 0 | 0 | 27 |
| 1999 | 0 | 0 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 6 |
| 2000 | 1 | 0 | 14 | 0 | 0 | 15 |
| 2001 | 0 | 0 | 9 | 1 | 4 | 14 |
| 2002 | 4 | 0 | 10 | 2 | 1 | 17 |
| 2003 | 6 | 0 | 3 | 2 | 0 | 11 |
| 2004 | 5 | 0 | 6 | 1 | 0 | 12 |
| 2005 | 6 | 0 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 11 |
| 2006 | 2 | 0 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 6 |
| 2007 | 6 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 8 |
| 2008 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 2009 | 2 | 0 | 10 [^] | 0 | 0 | 12 |
| 2010 | 0 | 0 | 8 | 0 | 1 | 9 |
| 2011 | 0 | 0 | 5 ^a | 2 | 0 | 7 |
| TOTALS (By State) | 41 | 1 | 145 | 9 | 6 | 202 |

LOCATION OF ABLV



[^]Note that ACT, SA and TAS have not recorded any cases of ABLV that satisfy this case definition.

[#] ABLV was first recognised in 1996. A bat from Townsville, QLD that died in 1995 was subsequently diagnosed with ABLV.

^{*}Source: CSIRO AAHL; Queensland Health 'Bat Stats' Database; National Animal Health Information System; Janine Barrett PhD thesis 2004 (with permission)

^{**}Note: Higher numbers of positive results were associated with peak years of testing in 1997 - 1998.

^a Note: Results were reported as 'equivocal' for FAT and 'negative' for PCR in three cases (2009 and 2011). It is not possible to exclude the possibility of ABLV in cases with these results and are included in the dataset.

ABLV BAT FACTS

1. ABLV is a virus that infects Australian flying foxes and insectivorous bats.
2. ABLV is closely related to, but distinct from Rabies virus.
3. ABLV causes a fatal disease in people and to date has been responsible for the deaths of two people in Australia.
4. People should not handle bats unless they are appropriately vaccinated.
5. Bats that are suspected to be infected with ABLV should be reported to the local Public Health Unit or veterinary authority for possible ABLV testing.
6. ABLV is transmitted to humans through biting, and potentially also through contact with saliva. In the event of a bat bite or other significant contact, seek medical attention URGENTLY.
7. Penetrating bite or scratch wounds should immediately be washed thoroughly with soap and water for 15 minutes* and a viricidal disinfectant applied. Bat saliva in the eyes or mouth should be rinsed out immediately and thoroughly with water.
8. For more information contact your local Public Health Unit for advice.

* As per current World Health Organisation (WHO) guidelines

AN ABLV INFECTED BAT MAY DISPLAY ANY OF THESE CLINICAL SIGNS:

- Abnormal behaviour such as excitation/agitation/aggression
- Paralysis or paresis
- Unprovoked attacks
- Unusual vocalisation
- Inability to fly
- Convulsions/ seizures/ tremors

DO NOT ATTEMPT TO HANDLE AN INJURED, UNWELL OR AGGRESSIVE BAT— REPORT IT TO YOUR LOCAL WILDLIFE SERVICE, VET OR BAT CARER GROUP.

USEFUL LINKS

For current policy on surveillance and management consult AUSVETPLAN:

(<http://www.animalhealthaustralia.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2011/04/ABL-07EDIT20Jan10.pdf>)

For current Department of Health and Aging information regarding ABLV see:

(http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/cda-pubs-other-bat_lyssa.htm)

For vaccination information contact your local or regional Public Health Unit, or see the immunisation handbook online at:

(<http://www.immunise.health.gov.au/internet/immunise/publishing.nsf/Content/Handbook-home>)

WILDLIFE COORDINATORS

If you would like information on ABLV testing or wish to report a suspected ABLV positive bat please contact your State Department of Primary Industries or Local Wildlife Coordinator (below).

| STATE | CONTACT | CONTACT DETAILS |
|------------|-------------------|--|
| ACT | Will Andrew | W: 02 6207 2357 F: 02 6207 2093 will.andrew@act.gov.au |
| NSW | Greg Curran | W: 08 8088-9336 F: 08 8087-3488 greg.curran@industry.nsw.gov.au |
| NT | Cathy Shilton | W: 08 8999 2122 cathy.shilton@nt.gov.au |
| QLD | Anita Gordon | W: 07 3276 6056 F: 07 3376 6620 anita.gordon@deedi.qld.gov.au |
| SA | Celia Dickason | W: 08 8389 8840 F: 08 8388 8899 celia.dickason@sa.gov.au |
| TAS | Annie Philips | W: 03 6233 2265 F: 03 6233 3477 annie.philips@dPIPWE.tas.gov.au |
| VIC | Mark Hawes | W: 03 9217 4386 F: 03 9217 4399 mark.hawes@dpi.vic.gov.au |
| WA | Tom Hollingsworth | W: 08 9780 6280 F: 08 9780 6136 tom.hollingsworth@agric.wa.gov.au |

About the AWHN Bat Health Focus Group

This document has been approved by the ABLV Focus Group. The ABLV focus group was formed to act as a catalyst to improve communication and coordination on issues relating to Australian Bat Lyssavirus in Australia.

Members come from organisations including the Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF), QLD Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (QLD DAF), Australian Government Department of Health and Aging (DoHA), Communicable Diseases Network of Australia (CDNA), QLD Health, Public Health and CSIRO Australian Animal Health Laboratory (CSIRO-AAHL). The group has a major focus on human and animal health issues associated with ABLV in Australia and the region; is based on scientific endeavour and scientific objectivity; encourages multi-organisational collaboration amongst federal, state, local government and non-government agencies; is based on complementarity with current organisations, researchers, conservationists and; is non-regulatory.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION OR TO CONTRIBUTE TO THIS PUBLICATION PLEASE CONTACT THE AWHN on awhn@zoo.nsw.gov.au or (02) 9932 4368

