

ABLV BAT STATS

ABLV Update, June 2010

Australian Bat Lyssavirus report June 2010

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 (SCAHL.S), QLD Department of Primary Industries (DPI), QLD HEALTH, The Australian Registry of Wildlife Health, Australian Wildlife Health Network subscribers and State/Territory representatives for 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 on eWHIS (www.wildlifehealth.org.au)

Positive ABLV cases for Jan-Jun 2010

There were four positive cases of Australian Bat Lyssavirus (ABLV) reported in Australia between January and June, 2010. (Table 1). Three of these positive cases have been confirmed in QLD, and one in WA.

120 individual bats were submitted for ABLV testing nationally between January and June.

QLD:

Of the three positive bats in Queensland, all three cases were in Little Red Flying Foxes, *Pteropus scapulatus*, (Jan—Central QLD, Jan - Hervey Bay, Feb - Tamborine)

Two of these bats presented with Neurological signs and typical ABLV symptoms, with one bat showing aggression, which was also submitted due to human contact. The third bat (from Hervey Bay) was presented for testing due to human contact.

WA:

One positive ABLV case was reported in Western Australia. This case was in a Little Red Flying Fox, *Pteropus scapulatus*, from Cable Beach, Broome. This is the first positive case seen in WA since 2002.

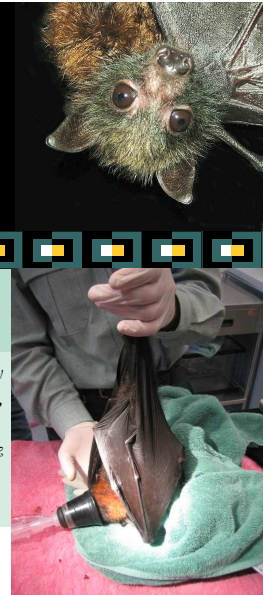
Public Health Significance

Two of the four positive cases submitted were as a result of human contact.

Due to infected bats being debilitated, they are typically found on or near to the ground. As a result, they have the highest probability of contact with humans and animals.

Positive ABLV cases to date

Historically, there have been 187 confirmed positive ABLV infected bats reported to June 2010 (Table 2). The vast majority of these have been in flying foxes.



GHFF anaesthesia, courtesy Jane Hall

Table 1: Statistics across Australia: ABLV positive cases in bats Jan-June 2010

STATE	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	Total
ACT	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
NSW	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
NT	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
QLD	2	1	0	0	0	0	3
SA	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
TAS	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
VIC	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
WA	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Total	2	1	0	0	0	1	4



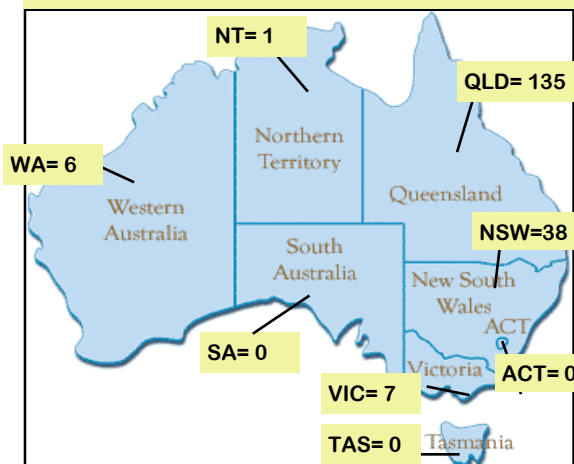
GHFF Photo courtesy of halleydesign.com

Table 2: Confirmed ABLV cases in bats (as confirmed by FAT, PCR, IHC and/or Virus Isolation^A) for Australia in the period Jan 1996 – Jun 2010. *

	NSW	NT	QLD**	VIC	WA	TOTALS (BY YEAR)	
1996		1	0	10 [#]	1	0	12
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		3	0	3	2	0	8
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 ^a	0	0	12
2010		0	0	3	0	1	4
TOTALS (BY STATE)	38	1	135	7	6	187	

^ANote that ACT, SA and TAS have no cases of ABLV that satisfy this case definition.
[#] One case in QLD 1996 was retrospectively diagnosed - first case was Jan 1995, Townsville.
^{*}Source: CSIRO AAHL; Queensland Department of 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.
^aNote: 1 result was reported as 'equivocal' for FAT and 'negative' for PCR in two cases. It is not possible to excluded the possibility of ABLV in these cases with these results.

KNOWN ABLV POSITIVE CASES IN BATS IN AUSTRALIA TO JUNE 2010



ABLV BAT FACTS

1. ABLV is a virus that infects some Australian flying foxes and insectivorous bats.
2. ABLV is closely related to, but distinct from Rabies virus.
3. ABLV causes a potentially 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. A bat bite or other significant contact should be considered URGENT. Seek medical attention without delay.
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 department for advice.

* As per current World Health Organisation (WHO) guidelines

USEFUL LINKS

For current policy on surveillance and management consult AUSVETPLAN: ([http://www.animalhealthaustralia.com.au/fms/Animal%20Health%20Australia/AUSVETPLAN/ABL-07EDIT\(20Jan10\).pdf](http://www.animalhealthaustralia.com.au/fms/Animal%20Health%20Australia/AUSVETPLAN/ABL-07EDIT(20Jan10).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/>)

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

- Abnormal behaviour such as excitation/frenzy /agitation/ aggression
- Paralysis
- Unprovoked attacks
- Unusual vocalisation
- Inability to fly
- Loss of condition
- Convulsions/ seizures/ tremors
- Dead bats remain hanging
- No clinical signs during the incubation period

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

DID YOU KNOW?

- Bats comprise one fifth of the world's total of mammal species.
- Bats have existed for at least 55 million years!
- Australia has 75 species of bats.
- Flying foxes are very social animals and live in large colonies called 'camps'.
- Bats do not require effort to hold on while upside-down—they only use their muscles to let go.



BFF—Photo courtesy of halleydesign.com

WILDLIFE COORDINATORS

If you would like information on ABLV testing or wish to report a suspected ABLV positive bat please contact your State DPI or State coordinator as below.

STATE	CONTACT	CONTACT DETAILS
ACT	Will Andrew	W: 02 6207 2357 F: 02 6207 2361 will.andrew@act.gov.au
NSW	Diane Ryan	W: 02 4640 6333 F: 02 4640 6300 diane.ryan@dpi.nsw.gov.au
NT	Cathy Shilton	W: 08 8999 2122 cathy.shilton@nt.gov.au
QLD	Anita Gordon	W: 07 3362 9419 F: 07 3362 9440 anita.gordon@dpi.qld.gov.au
SA	Celia Dickason	W: 08 8391 7125 F: 08 8388 8455 dickason.celia@saugov.sa.gov.au
TAS	Open	
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 ABLV 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.

Members come from organisations including the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF), Queensland Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries (QDPI&F), Department of Health and Aging (DoHA), Communicable Diseases Network of Australia (CDNA), Public Health and CSIRO Australian Animal Health Laboratory (CSIRO-AAHL). It 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



Australian Government
Department of Agriculture,
Fisheries and Forestry