

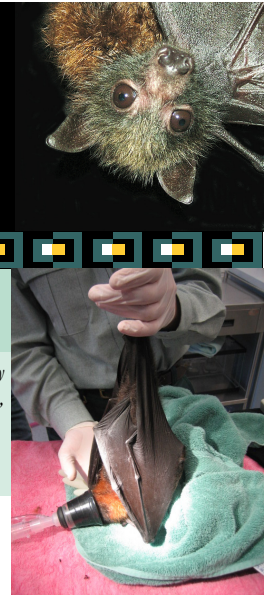
# ABLV BAT STATS

ABLV Update, 1 December 2008

## Australian Bat Lyssavirus report December 2008

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.

More detailed information is available on eWHIS ([www.wildlifehealth.org.au](http://www.wildlifehealth.org.au))



GHFF anaesthesia, courtesy Jane Hall

### No new positive ABLV cases

There have been no confirmed positive cases of ABLV in Australia for 2008. The last reported positive case was in a flying fox in April 2007.

### History of ABLV (CSIRO)

In May 1996 a black flying fox showing nervous signs was found near Ballina, NSW. Samples were sent to Yeerongpilly Veterinary Laboratory in Queensland as part of a surveillance program for the Hendra virus. The Hendra virus tests were negative, but the sample tested positive for rabies. Isolation and gene sequencing showed that it was a lyssavirus, which is closely related to common rabies. Investigation of stored bat tissue has so far identified virus in specimens collected as early as January 1995. Australian health authorities suggest lyssavirus poses a low public health risk.

Australia's rabies-free status has not changed as a result of the Australian bat lyssavirus discovery.



GHFF Photo courtesy of halleydesign.com

### KNOWN ABLV +VE CASES IN BATS IN AUSTRALIA TO DEC 2008

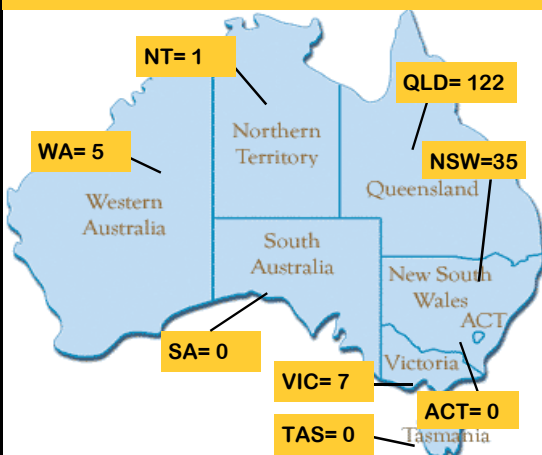


Table 2: Confirmed ABLV cases in bats (as confirmed by FAT, PCR, IHC and/or Virus Isolation<sup>^</sup>) for Australia in the period Jan 1996 – Dec 2008.

*						
	NSW	NT	QLD**	VIC	WA	TOTALS (BY YEAR)
1996	1		10 <sup>#</sup>	1		12
1997	7	1	27			35
1998	1		26			27
1999			6			6
2000	1		14			15
2001			9	1	4	14
2002	4		11	2	1	18
2003	3		2	2		7
2004	4		6	1		11
2005	6		5			11
2006	2		4			6
2007	6		2			8
2008	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTALS (BY STATE)	35	1	122	7	5	170

<sup>^</sup>Note that ACT, SA and TAS have no cases of ABLV that satisfy this case definition.

<sup>#</sup> One case in QLD 1996 was retrospectively diagnosed - first case was Jan 1995, Townsville.

<sup>\*</sup>Source: CSIRO AAHL; Queensland Department of Health 'Bat Stats' Database, National Animal Health Information System, Janine Barrett PhD thesis 2004 (with permission)

<sup>\*\*</sup>Note: Higher numbers of positive results were associated with peak years of testing in 1997 - 1998.

# 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/lyssafinal.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](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>)

## 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 20% of the world's mammal species.
- Bats emit ultrasonic sounds to communicate with each other
- One third of Australia's bats live in caves
- Of around 950 species of bats in the world, 75 are found in Australia



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 <a href="mailto:Will.andrew@act.gov.au">Will.andrew@act.gov.au</a>
NSW	Diane Ryan	W: 02 4640 6333 F: 02 4640 6300 <a href="mailto:Diane.Ryan@dpi.nsw.gov.au">Diane.Ryan@dpi.nsw.gov.au</a>
NT	Cathy Shilton	W: 08 8999 2122 <a href="mailto:Cathy.shilton@nt.gov.au">Cathy.shilton@nt.gov.au</a>
QLD	Anita Gordon	W: 07 3362 9419 F: 07 3362 9440 <a href="mailto:Anita.gordon@dpi.qld.gov.au">Anita.gordon@dpi.qld.gov.au</a>
SA	Celia Dickason	W: 08 8391 7125 F: 08 8388 8455 <a href="mailto:Dickason.celia@saugov.sa.gov.au">Dickason.celia@saugov.sa.gov.au</a>
TAS	Sarah Peck	W: 03 6336 5217 F: 03 6334 3085 <a href="mailto:Sarah.peck@dpiw.tas.gov.au">Sarah.peck@dpiw.tas.gov.au</a>
VIC	Jemma Bergfeld	W: 03 9217 4292 F: 03 9217 4399 <a href="mailto:Jemma.Bergfeld@dpi.vic.gov.au">Jemma.Bergfeld@dpi.vic.gov.au</a>
WA	Cleve Main	W: 08 9368 3426 F: 08 9474 1881 <a href="mailto:cmain@agric.wa.gov.au">cmain@agric.wa.gov.au</a>

## 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](mailto:awhn@zoo.nsw.gov.au) or (02) 9932 4368



Australian Government  
Department of Agriculture,  
Fisheries and Forestry