

ABLV BAT STATS

ABLV Update, Issue 1, 1 December 2007



Australian Bat Lyssavirus report December 2007

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 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)



Positive ABLV cases 2007
There have been no confirmed positive cases of ABLV in Australia for the third and fourth quarters of 2007. The last reported positive case was in a flying fox in April 2007.

The total number of positive cases in Australia for 2007 to date is 8 cases (Table 1). 6 positive cases have been seen in NSW - 5 bats were from the Lismore area and 1 case was from Murwillumbah. 5 of the 6 bats were Black flying foxes (*Pteropus alecto*) and 1 was a Grey-headed flying fox (*Pteropus poliocephalus*).

There have been 2 positive

cases in Queensland this year. One case was a Spectacled flying fox (*Pteropus conspicillatus*) in Cairns. The other case was a Black flying fox from Rockhampton.

Public Health Significance

In NSW, 1 positive bat was known to have scratched a person and 2 other cases had been handled by carers and a vet. Both of the Queensland cases were unwell bats that had been rescued and cared for by Wildlife carers.

Positive ABLV cases to date

Historically, there have been 170 confirmed positive ABLV

infected bats reported to December 2007 (Table 2). The vast majority of these have been in flying foxes.

Table 1: Statistics across Australia: ABLV positive cases in bats to Dec 2007

STAT	JAN to MAR 2007	APR to JUN 2007	JUL to DEC 2007	Total 2007
ACT	0	0	0	0
NSW	5	1	0	6
NT	0	0	0	0
QLD	2	0	0	2
SA	0	0	0	0
TAS	0	0	0	0
VIC	0	0	0	0
WA	0	0	0	0

AN ABLV INFECTED BAT MAY DISPLAYS 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.

KNOWN ABLV +VE CASES IN BATS IN AUSTRALIA TO DEC 2007



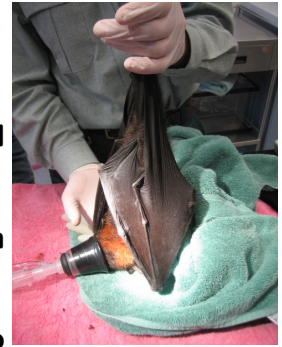
Table 2: Confirmed ABLV cases in bats (as confirmed by FAT, PCR, IHC and/or Virus Isolation[^]) for Australia in the period Jan 1996 – Dec 2007. *

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

[^]Note 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.

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.



GHFF anaesthesia, courtesy Jane Hall

* 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)

For vaccination information contact your local or regional Public Health Unit, or see the immunisation handbook online at: (<http://www9.health.gov.au/immhandbook/home.html>)

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
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GHFF Photo courtesy of halleydesign.com

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