

ABLV BAT STATS

ABLV Update, December 2009

Australian Bat Lyssavirus report December 2009

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), 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 2009

The total number of positive Australian Bat Lyssavirus cases in Australia for 2009 was twelve cases (Table 1). Ten of these positive cases have been confirmed in QLD, and two in NSW. This follows a year where no positive bats were recorded (2008)

QLD:

Of the ten positive bats in Queensland, four cases were in Little Red Flying Foxes, *Pteropus scapulatus*, (March—Bracken Ridge, September—Port Douglas, and November—Townsville), four cases in Black Flying Foxes, *Pteropus alecto*, (March—Sunshine Coast), one Grey-headed Flying Fox, *Pteropus poliocephalus*, (June—Beerwah), and one case in a Yellow-bellied Sheathtail Bat, *Saccolaimus flaviventris*, (May—Rockhampton). Four of these bats presented with Neurological signs and typical ABL symptoms including aggression. The remaining six were presented for testing due to human contact or unknown reasons.

Two Black Flying Fox's (*Pteropus alecto*) from Queensland had results returned as 'equivocal' for FAT and 'negative' for

PCR. It is not possible to excluded the possibility of ABLV in cases with these results, and therefore have been included as 'positive'.

NSW:

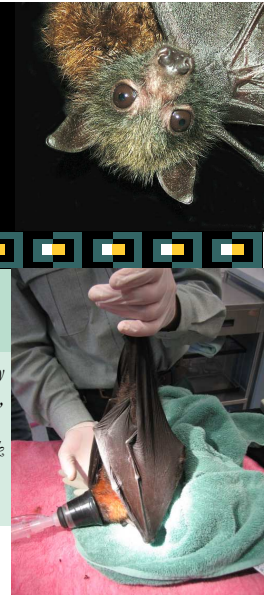
Two positive cases were reported in New South Wales, both in Grey-headed Flying Foxes, *Pteropus poliocephalus*. The first submission from Padstow in April, and the second from Woollahra in October. Both bats were presented with Neurological signs typical of ABL.

Public Health Significance

Four of the positive cases submitted from Queensland were as a result of human contact.

Positive ABLV cases to date

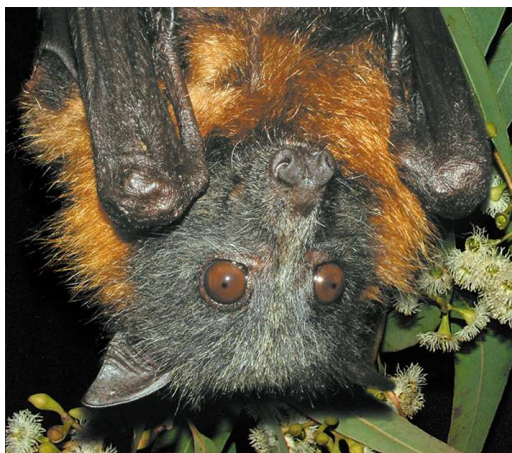
Historically, there have been 183 confirmed positive ABLV infected bats reported to December 2009 (Table 2). The vast majority of these have been in flying foxes.



GHFF anaesthesia, courtesy Jane Hall

Table 1: Statistics across Australia: ABLV positive cases in bats Jan-Dec 2009

STATE	Jan-Mar	Apr to Jun	Jul to Sep	Oct to Dec	Total
ACT	0	0	0	0	0
NSW	0	1	0	1	2
NT	0	0	0	0	0
QLD	4	2	1	3	10
SA	0	0	0	0	0
TAS	0	0	0	0	0
VIC	0	0	0	0	0
WA	0	0	0	0	0
Total	4	3	1	4	12



GHFF Photo courtesy of halleydesign.com

KNOWN ABLV +VE CASES IN BATS IN AUSTRALIA TO DEC 2009

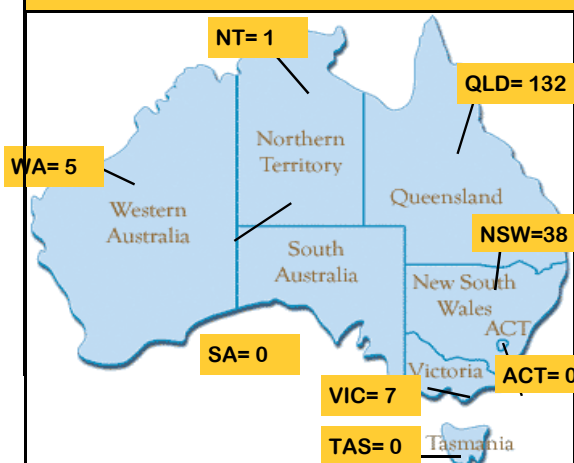


Table 2: Confirmed ABLV cases in bats (as confirmed by FAT, PCR, IHC and/or Virus Isolation[^]) for Australia in the period Jan 1996 – Dec 2009.

	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
TOTALS	38	1	132	7	5	183	

[^]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.

^aNote: 2 results were reported as 'equivocal' for FAT and 'negative' for PCR. It is not possible to excluded the possibility of ABLV in these cases with these results.

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/Handbook-home>)

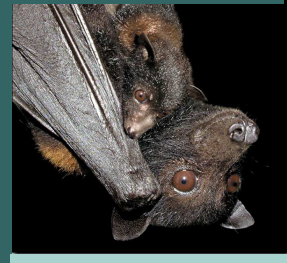
AN ABLV INFECTED BAT MAY DISPLAY ANY OF THESE CLINICAL SIGNS:

- 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 Will.andrew@act.gov.au
NSW	Diane Ryan	W: 02 4640 6333 F: 02 4640 6300 Diane.Ryan@dpi.nsw.gov.au
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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
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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