

Rabies – a threat to biodiversity

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The impact of rabies virus (RABV) on wild animals and the resulting implications for biodiversity have not been well studied. We conducted a review of species affected by rabies, and found that it has been documented in at least 201 mammalian species, including 17 with an elevated risk of extinction. Noting that canine rabies from domestic dogs accounts for the vast majority of transmission to wild animals, mass vaccination of dogs is key as a strategy for biodiversity conservation that also will have health benefits for domestic animals and people.

Once stable control of rabies is achieved in domestic dogs, any remaining threat of rabies for wildlife conservation can more effectively be addressed.