



FAIRFAX COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Impacts of Data Modernization on Rabies Exposure Reporting and Public Health Response

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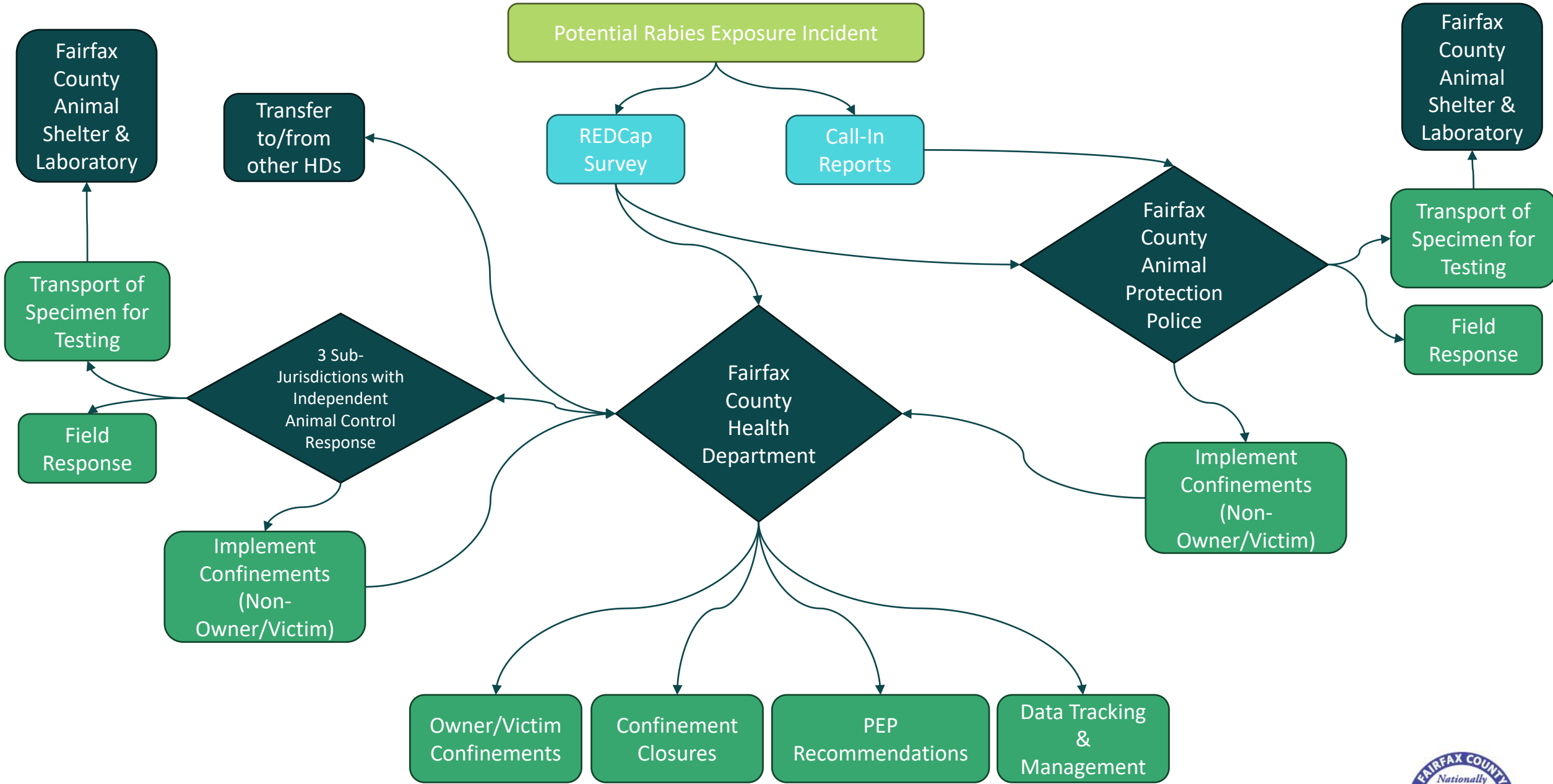
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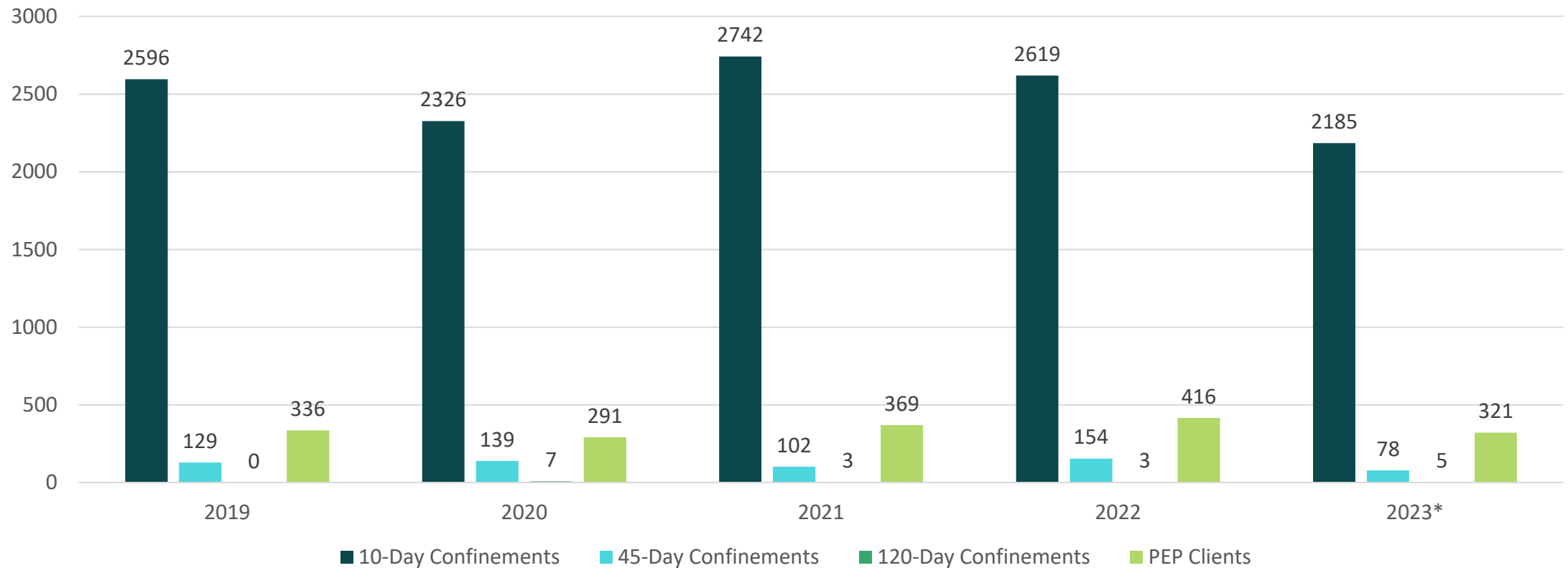
- Serves 1.2 million residents
- Neighbors Alexandria City, Arlington, Loudoun, Prince William, Washington D.C., and Maryland
- Contains 7 political sub-jurisdictions, 3 of which have separate Animal Control entities





Rabies Prevention in Fairfax County

Total Confinements Initiated and Clients Recommended Rabies PEP, by Year



*Year to Date as of 10/5/23

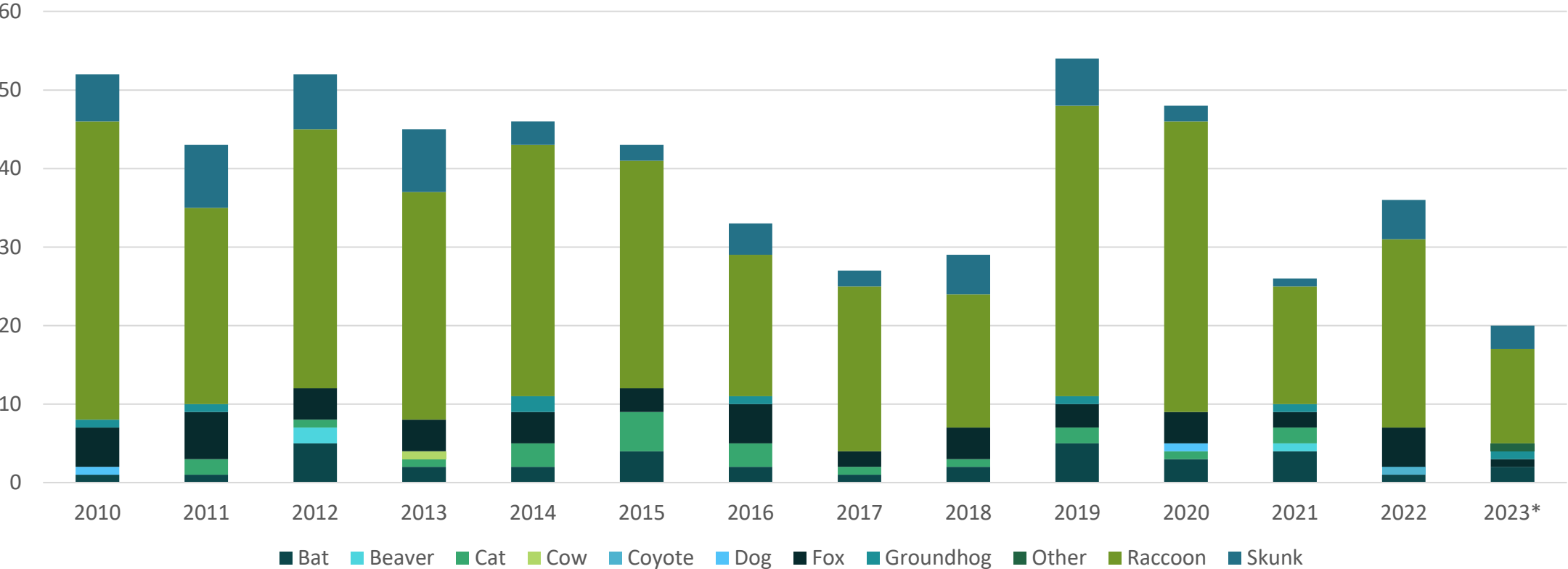


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Rabid Animals in Fairfax County

Rabid Animals, by Year



*Year to Date as of 10/5/2023



Step 1: Going Digital

- In 2019, Fairfax introduced the ability to report animal bites and potential rabies exposures electronically
 - REDCap survey which collects victim, incident details, and animal owner information from any source
 - Completed survey is sent to Animal Protection Police and Health Department staff for appropriate follow-up
- Associated outreach in medical facilities including training and education

Report Animal Bites and Rabid Animals

If a pet is witnessed interacting with wildlife or you suspect that an animal has rabies, report it to Fairfax County [Animal Protection Police](#) at 703-691-2131, TTY 711.

If someone you know has been bitten or scratched by an animal, report it immediately using the [Rabies Exposure & PEP Administration Report Form](#)

COMPLETE FORM



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Identifying Gaps

- In partnership with APP, HD staff identified areas that could be improved:
 - Frequent calls from veterinary facilities to non-emergency dispatch
 - Time consuming officer response to lower risk events (ex. Vet staff bitten by vaccinated domestic)
 - Loss to follow-up with owners forgetting to verify health after confinement period
 - Collecting information specific to each reporting group



Step 2: Making Improvements

- In September 2022, the REDCap survey was adjusted to be account for different reporting sources

Please select where you are reporting from:

* must provide value

☐ Medical Facility

☐ Veterinary Facility

☐ Self-Reporting

☐ Health Department

reset



Step 2: Making Improvements

- With this update, we wanted to address a specific gap in reporting from veterinary facilities

Is this report for: * must provide value	<input type="radio"/> A person bitten/scratched by an animal <input type="radio"/> An owner reporting a high-risk vector attack/interaction with their pet (includes bats, raccoons, foxes, skunks, bobcats, coyotes, bears, otters, groundhogs, beavers, opossums) reset
Was the person bitten/scratched by an animal a staff member or guest/pet owner at the veterinary clinic? * must provide value	<input type="radio"/> Staff Member <input type="radio"/> Guest/Pet Owner reset



Step 2: Making Improvements

- Access to information specific to veterinary professionals

<p>Was the biting/scratching pet showing any signs or symptoms of rabies not attributed to another condition?</p> <p>Signs and symptoms of rabies may include: unusual aggression or tameness; being unable to eat, drink, or swallow; drooling; staggering or stumbling; paralysis.</p> <p>* must provide value</p>	<p><input type="radio"/> Yes</p> <p><input type="radio"/> No</p>	<p>reset</p>
<p>Is the biting/scratching pet predominantly an outside pet?</p> <p>* must provide value</p>	<p><input type="radio"/> Yes</p> <p><input type="radio"/> No</p>	<p>reset</p>
<p>Did the biting/scratching pet die?</p> <p>* must provide value</p>	<p><input type="radio"/> Yes</p> <p><input type="radio"/> No</p>	<p>reset</p>



Step 2: Targeted Outreach



NEW ONLINE REPORTING PROCESS
Rabies Exposure & PEP Administration Reports

Visit: www.fairfaxcounty.gov/health/rabies

Or to directly open the report form use the QR code →



- In September 2022, 116 veterinary facilities in Fairfax County received informational packets via email and mail explaining updates to online reporting requirements and rabies exposure processes

How do I clear my pet from confinement?



Why is my pet confined for 10 days?

Very rarely, an animal that bites a person or another animal will have a disease called rabies. The 10-day confinement is a watch period for your pet to be sure it does not have rabies. The 10-day confinement is required by law, even if your pet has had a rabies vaccine.

If your pet is fine for the full 10-days, your pet did not have rabies. If your pet does become ill during confinement, it might have rabies. Experts from the health department will provide information on what to do in this situation.

We made it to day 10. Now what?

To release your animal from confinement, please follow the instructions in the email from the Fairfax County Health Department (no-reply_redcap@vdh.virginia.gov) with the subject "Fairfax County: 10-Day Animal Confinement Clearance Form". Once you have completed this, your animal is released from confinement. If you do not complete this, the health department will be reaching out.

Call 571-274-2296 **IMMEDIATELY** to contact the Fairfax County Health Department Emergency On-Call Rabies Program staff if:

- » Your animal becomes sick, dies or runs away, or
- » You would like to euthanize your animal, or
- » You would like to give your animal to another person or shelter



For more information, visit:
www.fairfaxcounty.gov/health/rabies

To request this information in an alternate format, contact the Fairfax County Health Department 703-246-2411 TTY 711. A Fairfax County, Va., publication, May 2022.

45 DAYS

How do I clear my pet from confinement?



Why is my pet confined for 45 days?

Very rarely, a wild animal that bites another animal will have a disease called rabies. The 45-day confinement is a watch period for your pet to be sure it does not develop rabies. The 45-day confinement is required by law, even if your pet has had a rabies vaccine and/or was recently boosted.

If your pet is fine for the full 45-days, your pet does not have rabies. If your pet does become ill during confinement, it might have rabies. Experts from the health department will provide information on what to do in this situation.

We made it to day 45. Now what?

Great news! Your pet did NOT develop rabies. To release your animal from confinement, contact the Fairfax County Health Department at (703) 246-2433. Rabies Program staff will work with you to show proof of life of your pet either through an in-person visit, a video call, or a dated picture. You will receive email reminders when your pet is eligible for clearance.

Call 571-274-2296 **IMMEDIATELY** to contact the Fairfax County Health Department Emergency On-Call Rabies Program staff if:

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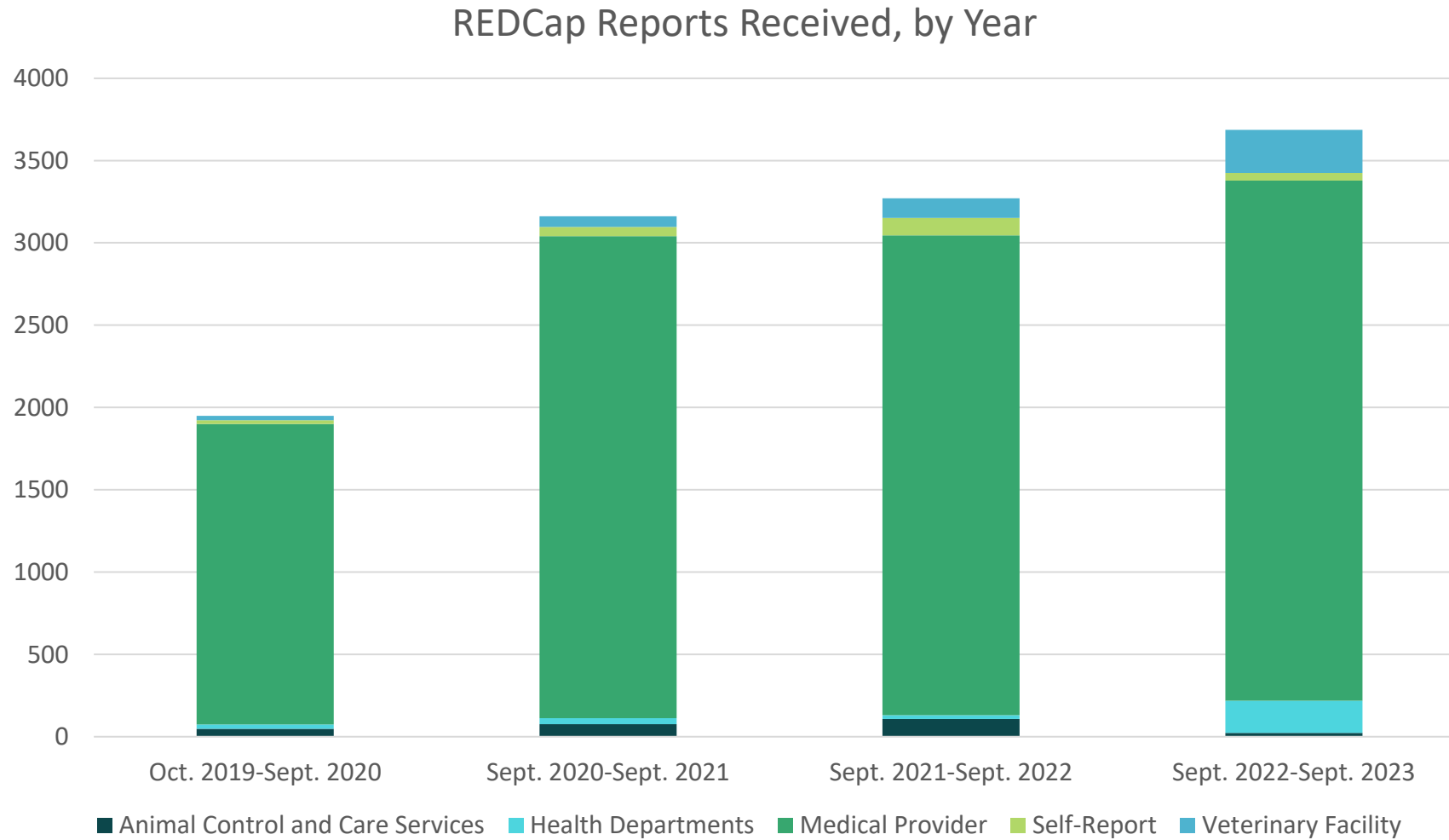
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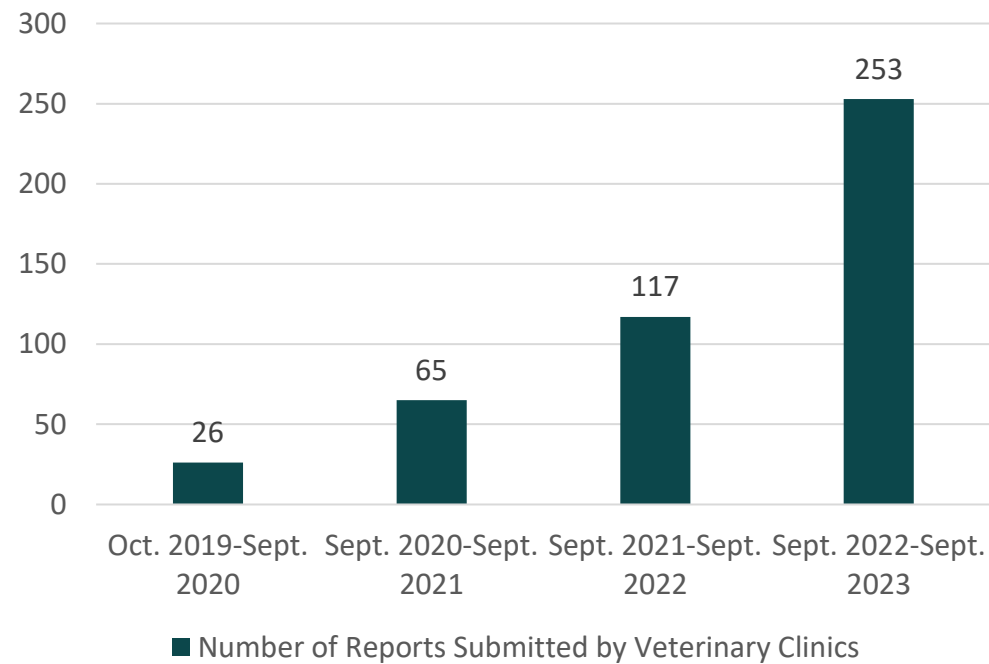


Electronic Reporting Outcomes

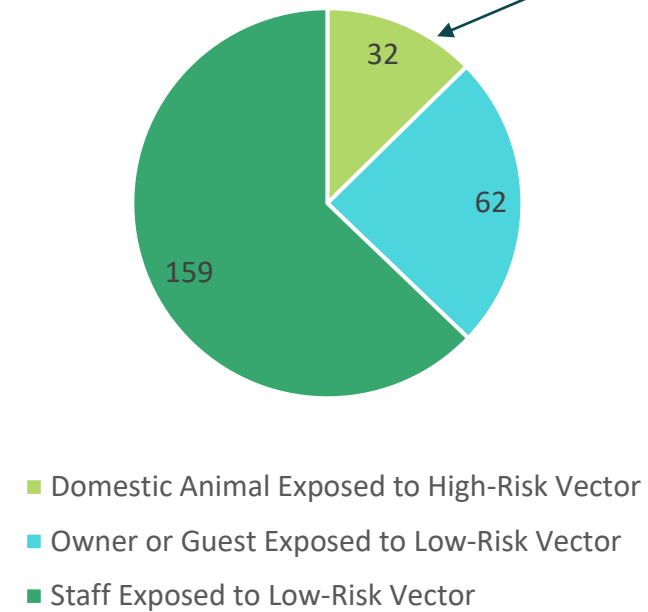


Outcomes

Number of Reports Submitted by
Veterinary Clinics since 2019



Number of Reports Submitted by
Veterinary Clinics, 2022-2023



Resulted in
45-day
confinements



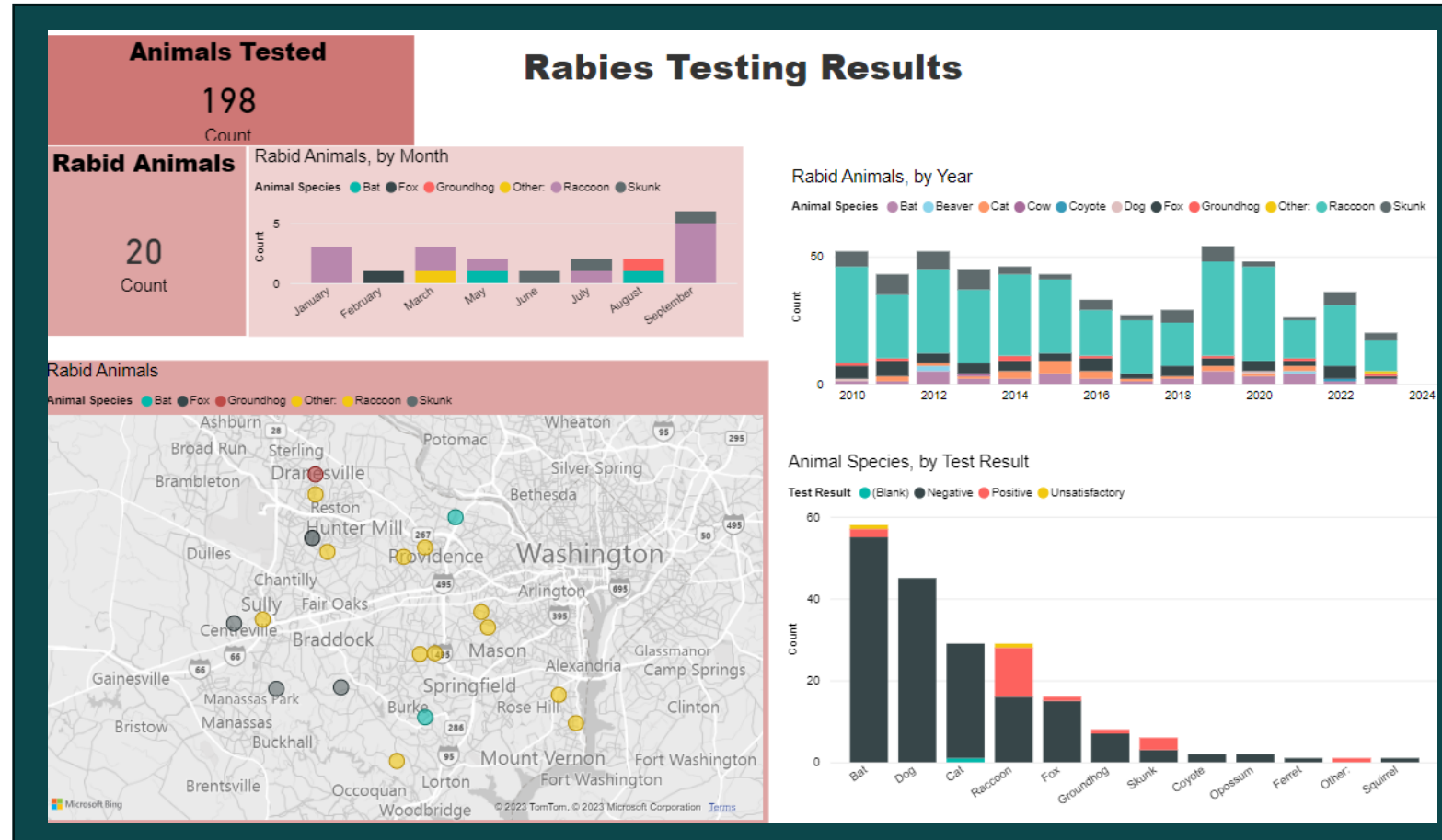
Outcomes

- Increased animal bite and potential rabies exposure reporting from veterinary facilities
- Improved ability to prioritize cases based on risk and automated alert structure
- Live-time data and improve situational awareness
- Easier triage and transfer of information



Outcomes

- Enriched data tracking and reporting



Next Steps for Electronic Reporting

- Continuously taking feedback on reporting systems with important considerations to our primary users
- Improving electronic confinement and clearance methods
- Outreach opportunities to educate animal owners
- Continuing to address susceptible populations





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Contact us at
HDRabies@fairfaxcounty.gov

For more information on our project or to obtain the template for our
REDCap survey for use in your Health District.

