



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

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## A Helping Hand In The Fight Against Rabies

PATTY RITCHIE August 11, 2017



As summer continues, it's great to be able to enjoy the outdoors and all this beautiful region we call home has to offer. However, wild animals stay increasingly active this time of the year and it's important that we all take steps to protect ourselves and our pets against hazards, like rabies.

Over the last few days, crews began conducting rabies "bait drops" in parts of the North Country, which have been expanded to include the susceptible Black River Valley area. Baits will soon be available for residential distribution in Jefferson County.

Through this unique effort—which is conducted by Cornell University—low-flying planes drop small packets containing a rabies vaccine, surrounded by a mixture of sugar, vegetable fat and other flavors, that are then consumed by animals, namely raccoons. This is done to help combat the spread of this potentially deadly disease, which affects the central nervous system and is transmitted via the bite of a rabid animal.

With over 2,300 cases of rabies reported across New York State since 2010—including more than 140 in Jefferson, Oswego and St. Lawrence Counties—it's now more important than ever to protect our communities from this potentially deadly disease.

To help address this problem, I'm pleased to report that in the recent state budget, I was proud to secure \$635,000 in funding to assist with the development of vaccine programs and safeguard public health through prevention efforts and increased awareness.

From protecting our health to making sure our “furry friends” are safe if they encounter a wild animal that behaves strangely, I'll be working to support programs and other initiatives that look to combat this problem across our region.