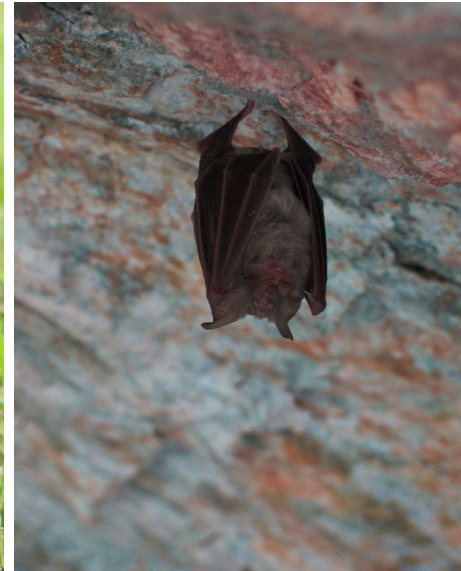


SUCCESS STORY
**Wildlife Habitat and Damage
Management Education**



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According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, “rabies is a preventable viral disease of mammals most often transmitted through the bite of a rabid animal. The vast majority of rabies cases reported to the CDC each year occur in wild animals like raccoons, skunks, bats, and foxes”.

For several years the USDA has maintained an Oral Rabies Vaccination (ORV) barrier along the Appalachian Mountains to prevent the westward movement of a raccoon strain of rabies which occurs on the east side of the mountain range. However, this summer two cases of raccoon strain rabies were confirmed in Virginia just seven miles from the Kentucky border. The ANR agent worked closely with USDA personnel to make people aware of the issue. Alerts were issued locally and animal carcasses were collected for testing.

A biologist with the USDA attended a Bell County Fiscal Court meeting with the ANR agent to raise awareness of the seriousness of the matter. From that meeting a local newspaper reporter contacted the Extension office to get more details and do an interview for a news article. Two USDA biologists presented an educational program at the 2017 Bell County Farm Field Day covering rabies surveillance and aerial oral rabies vaccination distribution.

At present no other cases of the raccoon strain rabies have been confirmed in the surveillance area.