

Animal Health Update: SARS-CoV-2 in Animals Grant: Testing Progress and Survey Results 10.24.2022

Key Points

- Many animal species have been found to be susceptible to SARS-CoV-2 infection including but not limited to big cats, deer, dogs, domestic cats, mink, non-human primates, otters, rabbits, raccoons, skunks, and various rodent species.
- SARS-CoV-2 infection in cats and dogs can actually be quite common - up to 40-50% of cats and dogs in COVID-19 positive households test positive for SARS-CoV-2 by serology.
- Veterinary Public Health is offering [free SARS-CoV-2 PCR testing](#) for qualified pets.

Dear Colleagues,

As you may be aware, Los Angeles County Veterinary Public Health (VPH) received funding from the Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists (CSTE) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to conduct surveillance for SARS-CoV-2 in animals. As part of this project, VPH also conducted a Knowledge, Attitudes, and Practices survey regarding SARS-CoV-2 in animals among veterinarians in Los Angeles County. This AHAN summarizes our testing progress so far, as well as some interesting results from the survey.

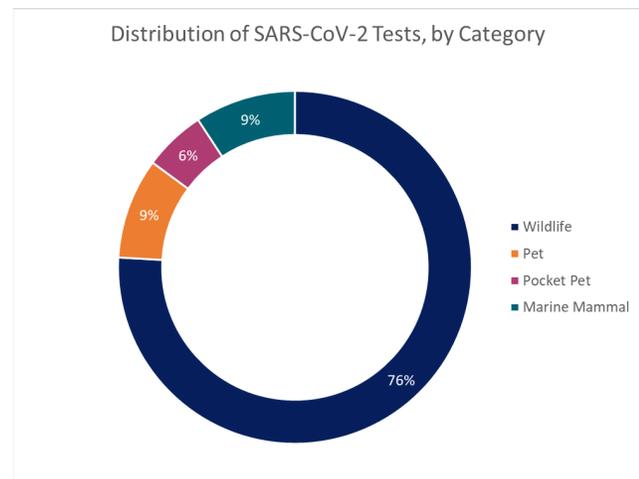
Update: SARS-CoV-2 Testing in Animals

VPH has conducted 336 SARS-CoV-2 PCR tests in various species in Los Angeles County. The majority of tests (76%) have been from wildlife species, including but not limited to bats, coyotes, squirrels, raccoons, opossums, and deer. Other areas of interest including marine mammals, pocket pets, and exposed dogs and cats make up a much smaller amount of completed testing. VPH has found one PCR positive test result, which was in a symptomatic dog exposed to COVID (1 of 19 dogs tested).

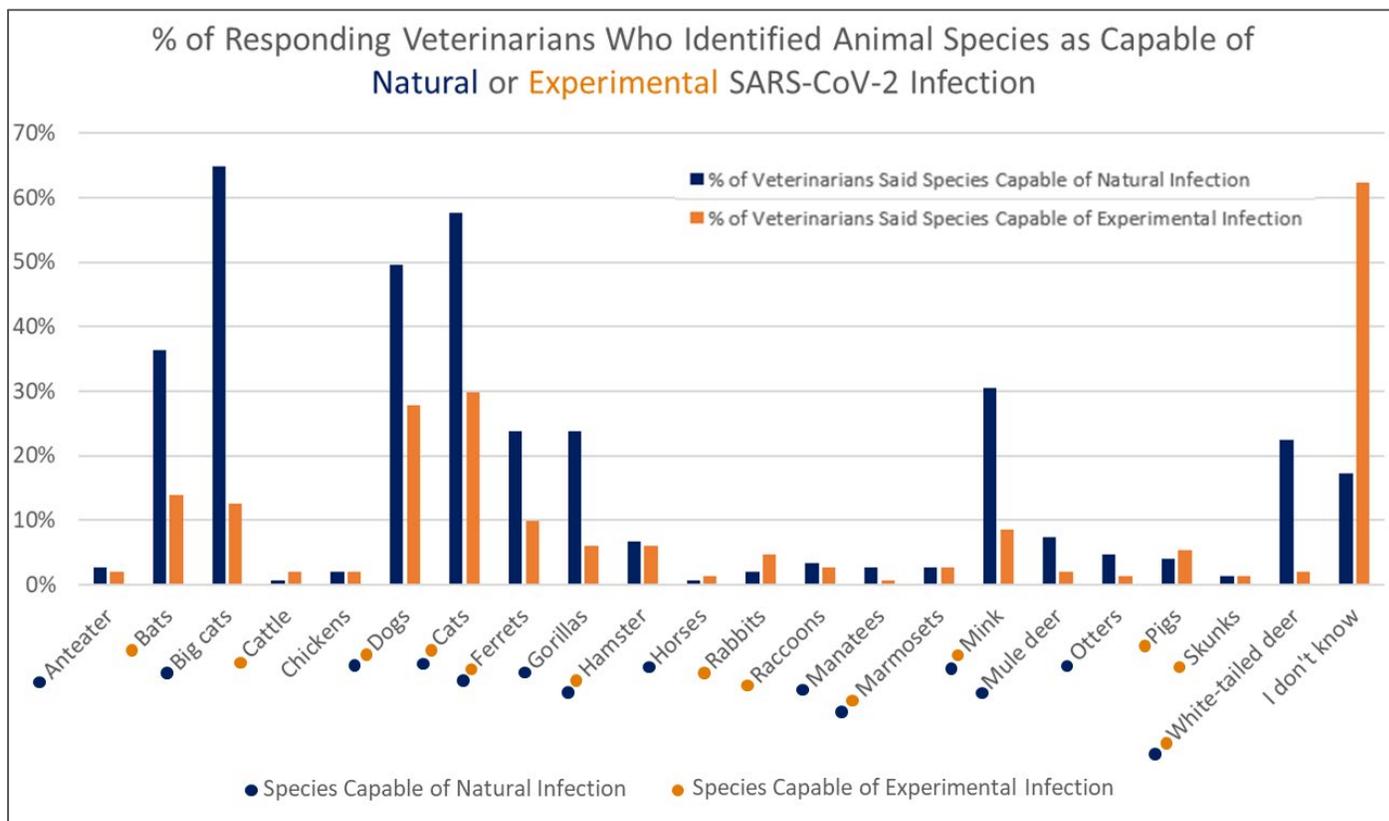
Update: Knowledge, Attitudes, and Practices Survey Among Veterinary Clinics in Los Angeles County

Thank you to everyone who filled out our Knowledge, Attitudes, and Practices survey about SARS-CoV-2 in animals. VPH greatly appreciates your time, and your input is critical to the work we do as a public health agency.

We received 152 complete responses from veterinary clinics in Los Angeles County. We found over half of responding veterinarians correctly identified big cats, domestic cats, and dogs as capable of natural infection with SARS-CoV-2. Other species that have been found to have



natural infection with SARS-CoV-2 were less commonly identified, including anteaters, deer, ferrets, gorillas, horses, manatees, marmosets, mink, and otters. Also, 36% of responding veterinarians identified bats as capable of natural infection, which actually has not been proven yet. Egyptian fruit bats have been experimentally infected, but there is currently no published evidence of a bat with natural SARS-CoV-2 infection. A full summary of veterinarian’s responses to which species can be naturally and/or experimentally infected with SARS-CoV-2 is shown in the figure below, along with a circle next to the species name to indicate correct answers.



Several studies have found up to 40-50% of cats and dogs in COVID-19 positive households test positive for SARS-CoV-2 by serology^{1,2}. When asked in the knowledge section if this statement was true or false, 15% of responding veterinarians correctly identified this as true.

VPH Wants to Partner with You!

VPH is very interested in partnering with veterinary clinics and can offer [free SARS-CoV-2 PCR testing](#) for pocket pets (whether or not they have been exposed) and cats and dogs (only with a recent known exposure).

If you are interested in participating, please reach out to us by email (vet@ph.lacounty.gov) or phone (213-288-7060). We will then deliver sample collection kits to your clinic and later pick up samples for testing. Samples must get to the Public Health Lab within 3 days of collection.

VPH is also able to do home visits, if pet owners are willing to take the sample from their pets themselves. Please feel free to distribute the attached infographics to your clientele, informing them of this free testing opportunity.

References

1. Hamer, S. A., Pauvolid-Corrêa, A., Zecca, et al. (2021). SARS-CoV-2 Infections and Viral Isolations among Serially Tested Cats and Dogs in Households with Infected Owners in Texas, USA. *Viruses*, 13(5), 938.
2. Bienzle, D., Rousseau, J., Marom, D., et al. (2022). Risk Factors for SARS-CoV-2 Infection and Illness in Cats and Dogs. *Emerging Infectious Diseases*, 28(6), 1154-1162.

Thank you for your continued efforts to keep animals and humans healthy throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. We appreciate your assistance in learning more about this virus and how it impacts both animals and people.

Sincerely,

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