



# Environmental Public Health Services Alberta Region: Animals and Human Health

January 18, 2024



# Presentation Outline

- Overview of Environmental Public Health Services (EPHS)
- EPHS and Communicable Disease Control
  - Animal Bite Exposure Follow-up
  - Animal Exposure Form and Animal Exposure Regional Data
  - Animals and Human Health Program
  - Resources
  - Questions/Feedback



# Environmental Public Health Services

- EPHS works to identify and prevent or mitigate environmental public health risks that could adversely impact the health of the community.
- Programming includes public health inspections, monitoring environmental conditions such as drinking water, delivering training and raising awareness about potential environmental public health risks, and the steps people can take to protect themselves and their families.
- **Prevention** is a key principle of environmental public health.



# EPHS - Core Program Areas



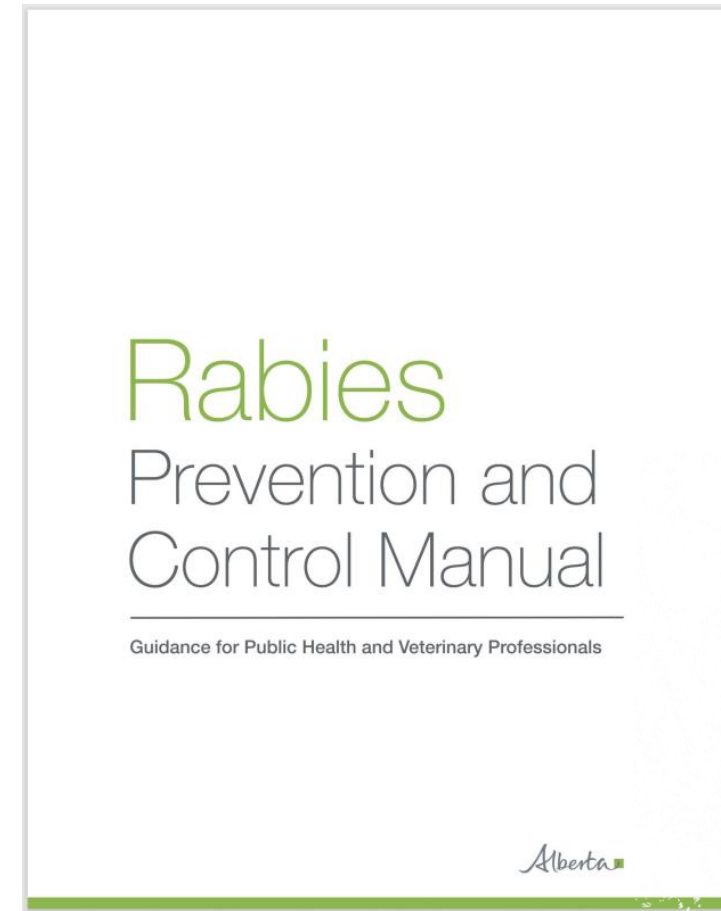
# Communicable Disease Control

- Animal bite exposure follow up



# Animal Exposure Follow Up

- April, 2019, EPHS took over Animal Exposure follow-up from Regional CDC team.
- Follow-up activities include:
  - Conducting rabies risk assessment; working with the Medical Officer of Health (MOH)
  - Coordinating sharing of information with MOH and external agencies as needed (AHS, CFIA)
  - Communicating the decision of the MOH with the community
  - Reporting on animal exposure data





# Animal Exposure Follow Up – Animal Exposure Report

Nexus Number: NX00 [ ]

**Animal Exposure Report**
 Initial Report

Environmental Public Health Services Fax Number: 780-495-2796  
EPHS On Call Phone Number: 780-719-8782

**Client's Demographics:**

Name (Last, First): [ ] ULI: [ ]

Guardian/Parent Name (if applicable): [ ] Birthdate (YYYY/MMM/DD): [ ]

House Address: [ ] Age: [ ]

Community: [ ]  Unknown Sex:  Female  Male

Phone Number: [ ] Weight: [ ]

Client lives in the First Nation  Client does not live in the First Nation  Unable to contact client

**Date and Time of Animal Exposure**

Date of Animal Exposure (YYYY/MMM/DD): [ ]

Time of Animal Exposure (24 hour clock): [ ]

The animal exposure:  occurred in the First Nation  did not occur in the First Nation (identify location)

**Animal Information:**

<p><b>Species Causing Exposure:</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Dog <input type="checkbox"/> Bat* <input type="checkbox"/> Small mammal (Example: rabbit, gopher, mouse)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Cat <input type="checkbox"/> Skunk* <input type="checkbox"/> Raccoon* [ ]</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Ferret <input type="checkbox"/> Fox* <input type="checkbox"/> Bird [ ]</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other owned animal [ ] <input type="checkbox"/> Other wild carnivore* [ ] <input type="checkbox"/> Other wild non-carnivore (Example: deer, porcupine)</p>	<p><b>Ownership Status of the Animal:</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Wild Animal</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Stray Animal</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Domestic (pet, livestock, etc.)</p> <p>Owner's Name &amp; Contact Info: [ ]</p>
--	--

\*HIGHER RISK: If the exposure is a bat, skunk, racoon, fox, or other wild carnivore (coyote, wolf, mink, weasel, badger, cougar, lynx, or bear) complete the report up to the bottom of page 3, fax the report to 780-495-2796 and call the EPHS on call phone number immediately (780-719-8782).

**Description of the Animal (Colour, Breed, Sex, Age, etc.):**

[ ]

**Domestic Animal**  N/A

Yes  No

Has the animal received a rabies vaccination? [ ]

If yes, when was the most recent rabies vaccination? (YYYY/MMM/DD) [ ]

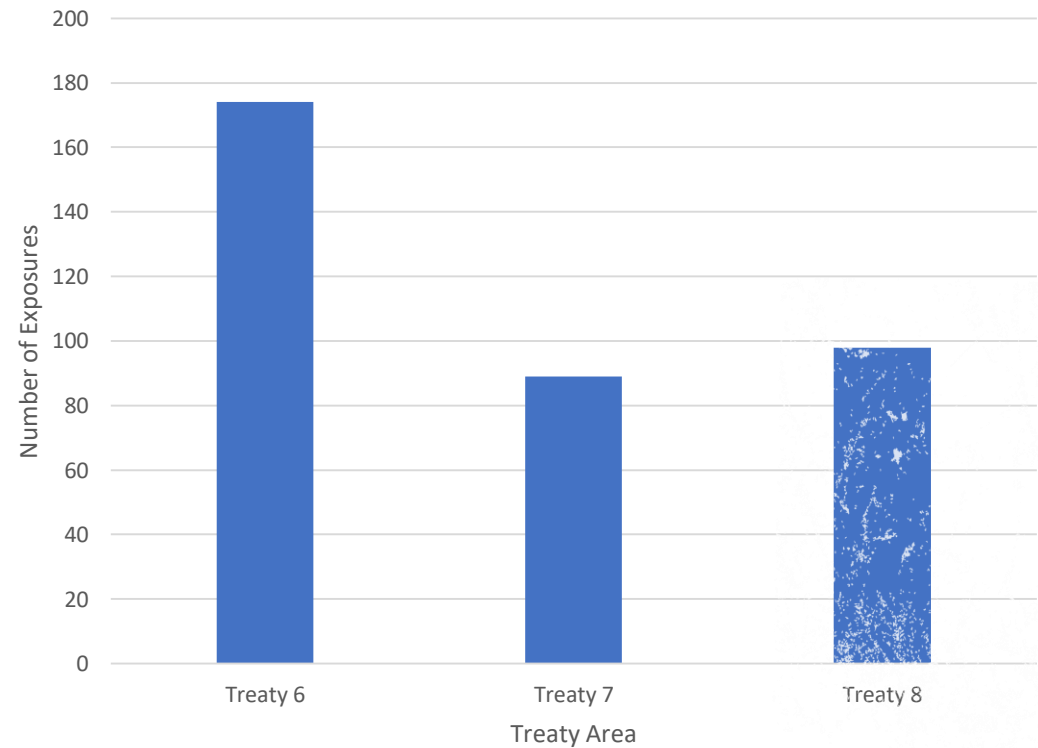
Veterinarian Contact Info: [ ]



# Animal Exposure Follow Up – Animal Exposure Report: Client Demographics Data:

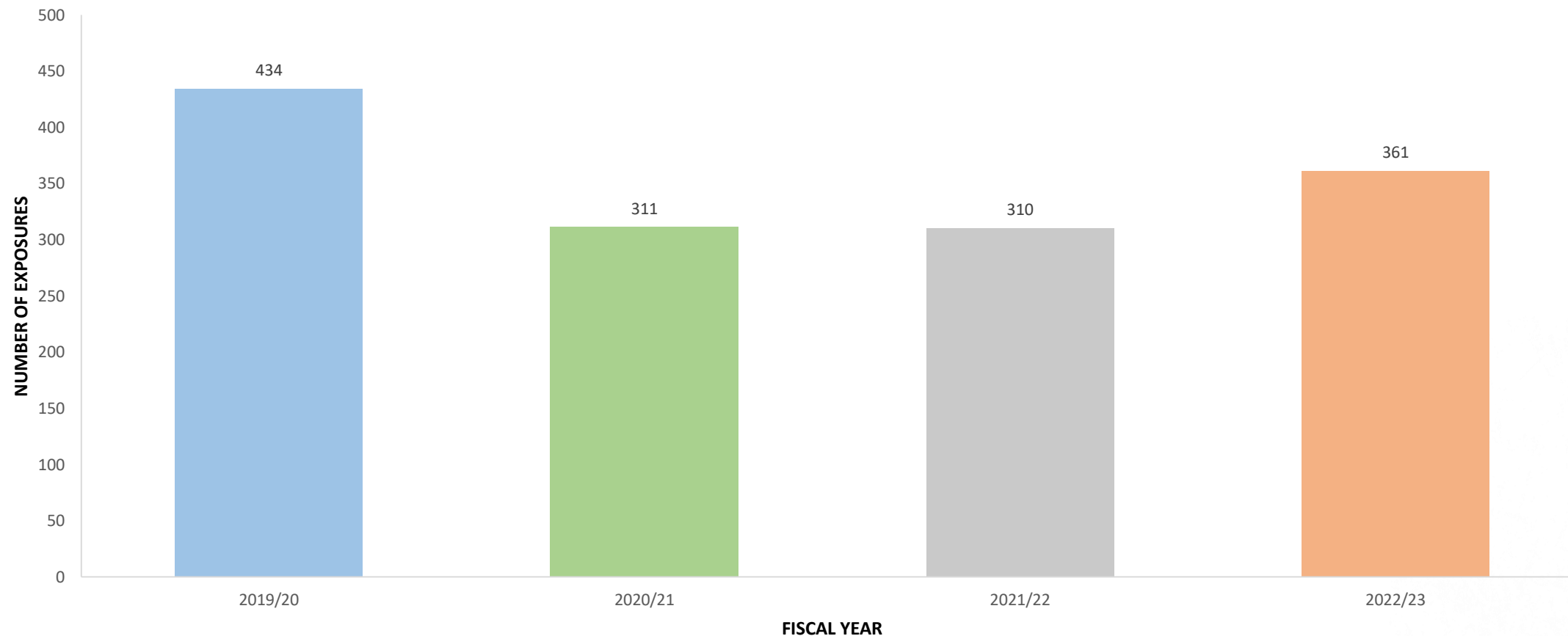
Client's Demographics:	
Name (Last, First): _____	ULI: _____
Guardian/Parent Name (if applicable): _____	Birthdate (YYYY/MMM/DD): _____
House Address: _____	Age: _____
Community: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown	Sex: <input type="checkbox"/> Female <input type="checkbox"/> Male
Phone Number: _____	Weight: _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Client lives in the First Nation <input type="checkbox"/> Client does not live in the First Nation <input type="checkbox"/> Unable to contact client	

Animal Exposures in First Nation Communities, 2022-2023 by Treaty





# Number of reported animal exposures, First Nations Communities in Alberta, 2019/20 to 2022/23

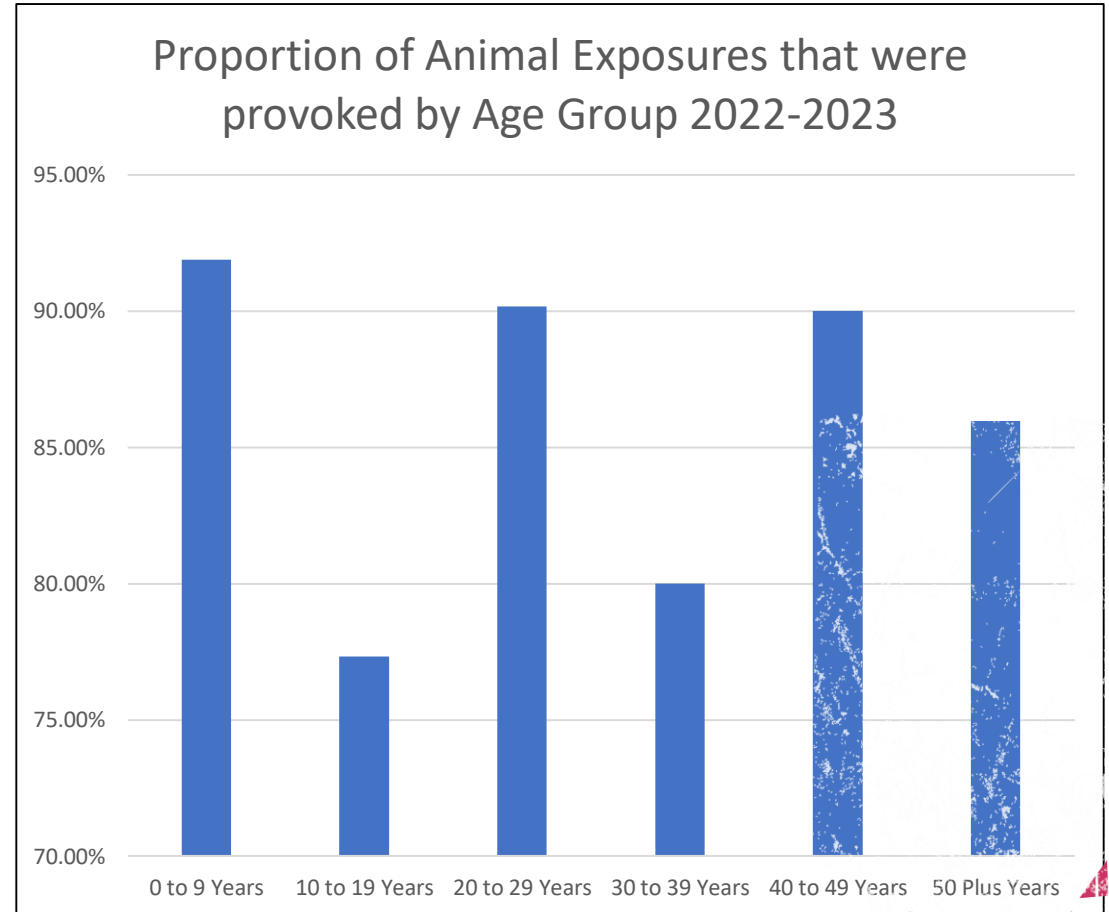
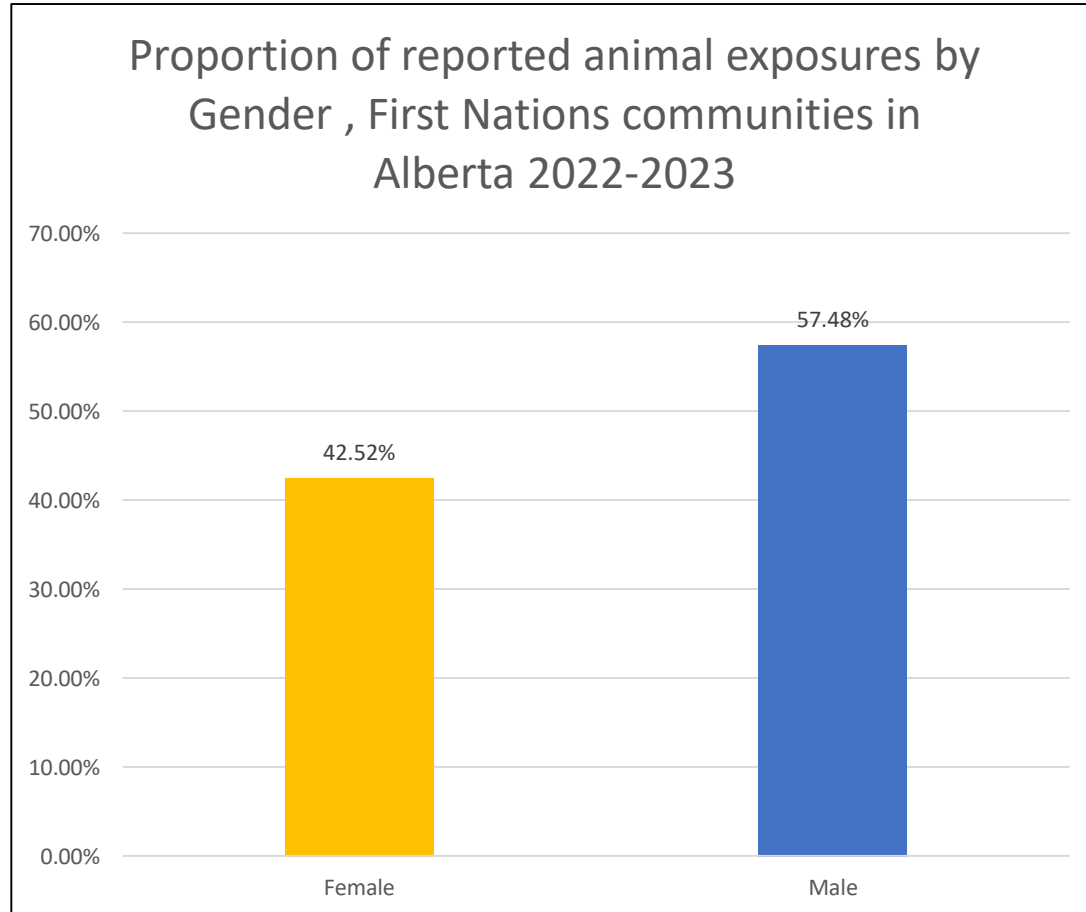


**Environmental Public Health Services**  
In First Nations communities

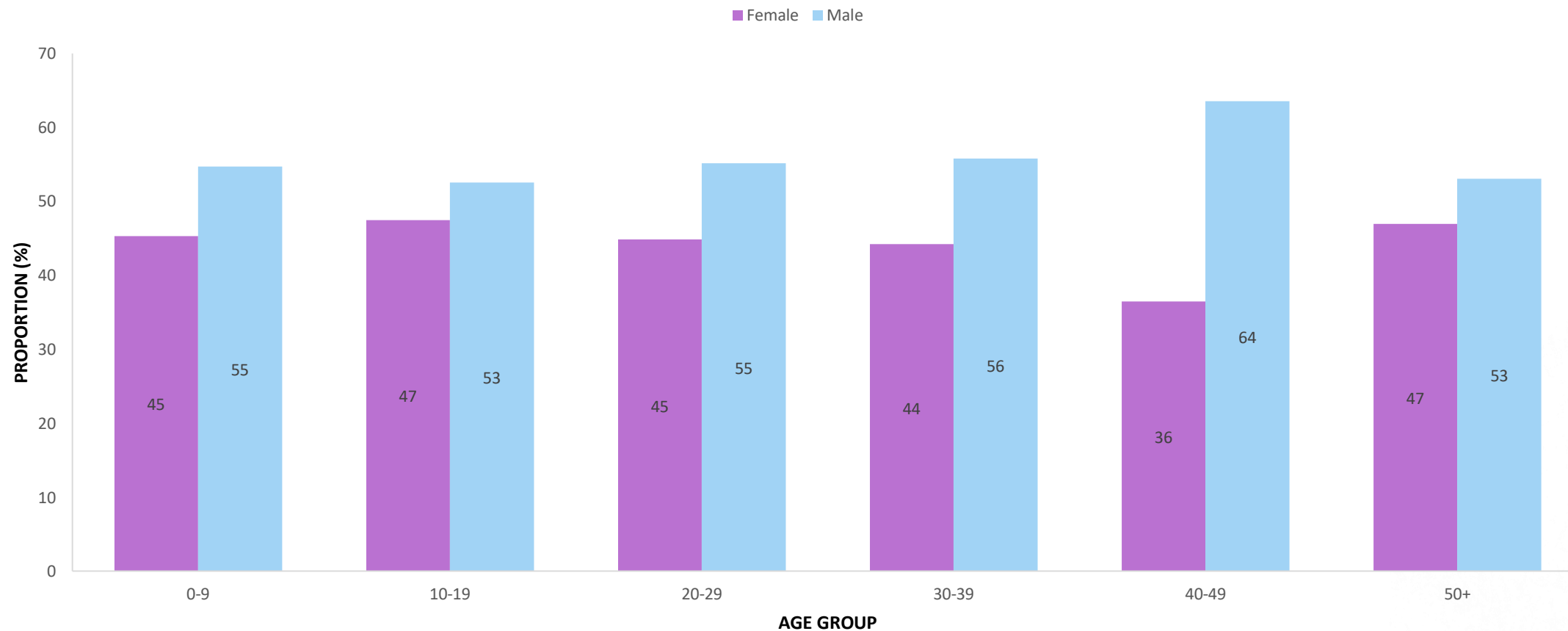
**Services de santé environnementale et publique**  
dans les communautés des Premières Nations



# Animal Exposure Follow Up – Animal Exposure Report: Client Demographics Data:



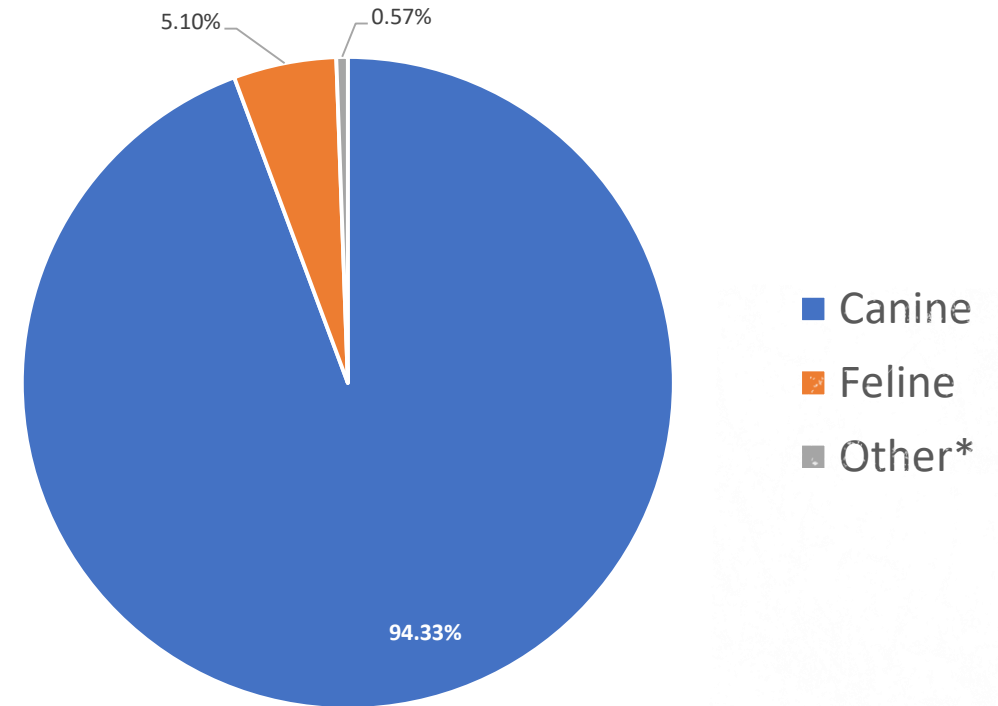
# Proportion of reported animal exposures by gender and age group, First Nations communities in Alberta, 2019/20 to 2022/23



# Animal Exposure Follow Up – Animal Exposure Report: Animal Information Data:

Animal Information:	
<b>Species Causing Exposure:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Dog <input type="checkbox"/> Cat <input type="checkbox"/> Ferret <input type="checkbox"/> Other owned animal _____	<b>Ownership Status of the Animal:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Bat* <input type="checkbox"/> Skunk* <input type="checkbox"/> Raccoon* <input type="checkbox"/> Fox* <input type="checkbox"/> Other wild carnivore* _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Small mammal (Example: rabbit, gopher, mouse) _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Bird _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Other wild non-carnivore (Example: deer, porcupine) _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Wild Animal <input type="checkbox"/> Stray Animal <input type="checkbox"/> Domestic (pet, livestock, etc.) Owner's Name & Contact Info: _____ _____
<p><b>*HIGHER RISK:</b> If the exposure is a bat, skunk, racoon, fox, or other wild carnivore (coyote, wolf, mink, weasel, badger, cougar, lynx, or bear) complete the report up to the bottom of page 3, fax the report to 780-495-2796 and call the EPHS on call phone number immediately (780-719-8782).</p>	
<b>Description of the Animal (Colour, Breed, Sex, Age, etc.):</b> _____ _____ _____	
<b>Domestic Animal</b> <input type="checkbox"/> N/A Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
Has the animal received a rabies vaccination? If yes, when was the most recent rabies vaccination? (YYYY/MMM/DD) _____ Veterinarian Contact Info: _____	

Animal Exposure by Species in First Nation Communities 2022-2023

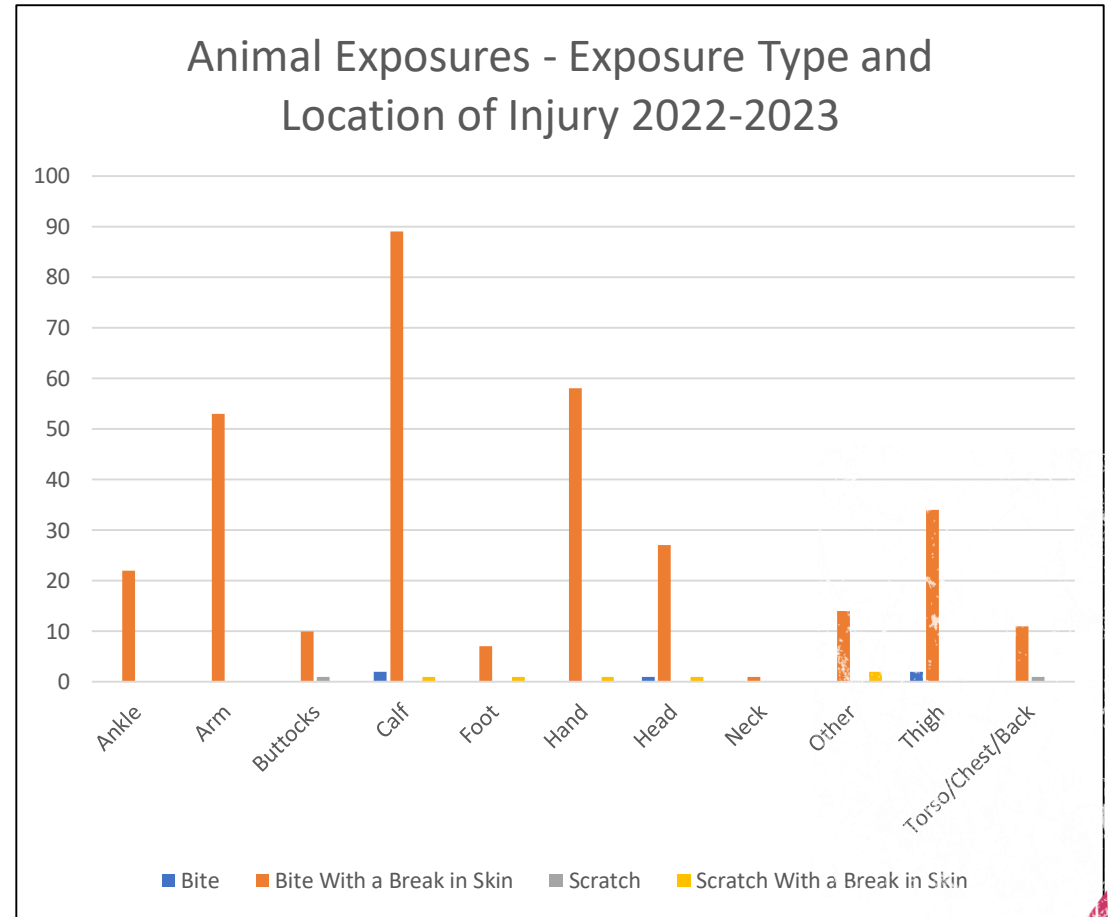
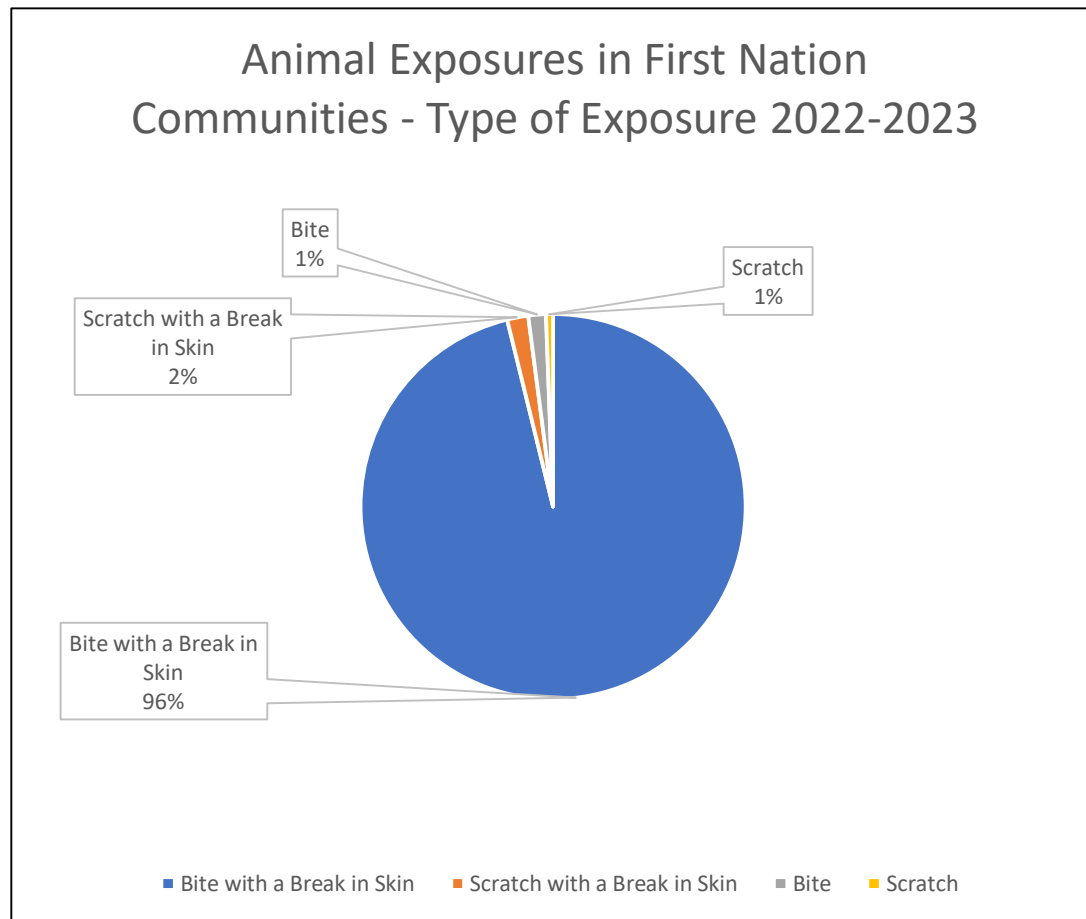


# Animal Exposure Follow Up – Animal Exposure Report: Information About the Incident:

Information about Incident:		
<b>Animal's Health Status – used to determine the need for rabies vaccine or immune globulin</b>		
Yes** <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	Did the animal have an unhealthy appearance?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Did the animal have abnormal behaviours or show signs of rabies prior to the incident?
<p>Examples of abnormal behaviours include: agitation, isolation, or unusual aggression. Signs of rabies may include lethargy, fever, vomiting, anorexia, colic, lameness, changes in behaviour, self-mutilation, excessive salivation, abnormal vocalization, and/or seizures.</p> <p><b>**HIGHER RISK: If the animal appeared unhealthy, had abnormal behaviours or had signs of rabies, complete the report up to the bottom of page 3, fax the report to 780-495-2796 and call the EPHS on call phone number immediately (780-719-8782).</b></p>		
<b>Exposure Type (select all that apply):</b>	<b>Location of Exposure (select all that apply):</b>	<b>Description of the Incident:</b>
Yes No <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Bite</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> ...with saliva? <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> ...with a break in skin? <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Scratch</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> ...with a break in skin? <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Other:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Head*** <input type="checkbox"/> Neck*** <input type="checkbox"/> Torso/Chest/Back <input type="checkbox"/> Arm <input type="checkbox"/> Hand <input type="checkbox"/> Thigh <input type="checkbox"/> Calf <input type="checkbox"/> Ankle <input type="checkbox"/> Foot <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ <p><b>***HIGHER RISK: If the exposure is on the head and/or neck, complete the report up to the bottom of page 3, fax the report to 780-495-2796 and call the EPHS on call phone number immediately (780-719-8782).</b></p>	
<b>Provocation – used to determine the need for rabies vaccine or immune globulin</b>		
The incident was:	<input type="checkbox"/> Provoked	<input type="checkbox"/> Unprovoked****
<p><u>A provoked attack</u> is one where the human did something to provoke the animal (even if the action was unintentional) and the attack would be the animal's normal response to such a human action. Examples include: attempting to corner or trap an animal; entering an area that the animal considers its territory; approaching an animal's off spring; coming too close to an injured animal; trying to break up a fight between two animals; picking up an animal; petting an unfamiliar animal; interfering with an animal's food; interfering/wrestling with an animal's owner; wrestling/playing with the animal; or exposing the animal to stress such as a new environment/people/other animals.</p> <p><u>An unprovoked attack</u> is one where the person did not surprise, startle, antagonize or threaten the animal or enter its territory.</p> <p><b>****HIGHER RISK: If the incident was unprovoked, complete the report up to the bottom of page 3, fax the report to 780-495-2796 and call the EPHS on call phone number immediately (780-719-8782).</b></p>		

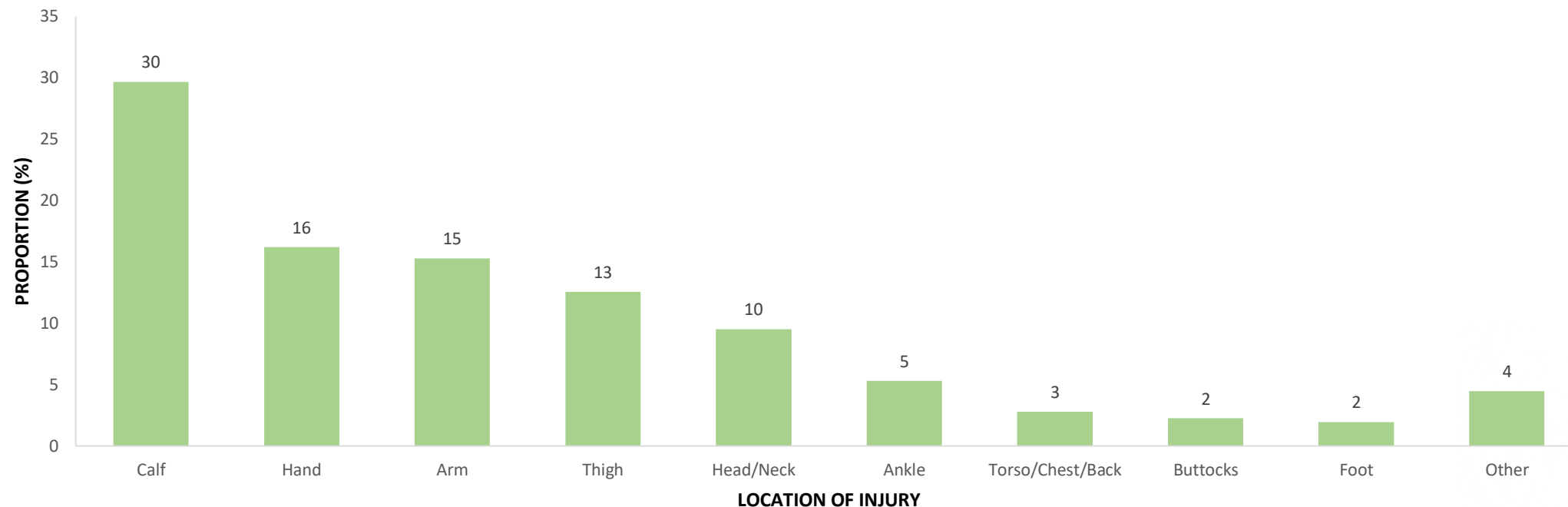


# Animal Exposure Follow Up – Animal Exposure Report: Information About the Incident:



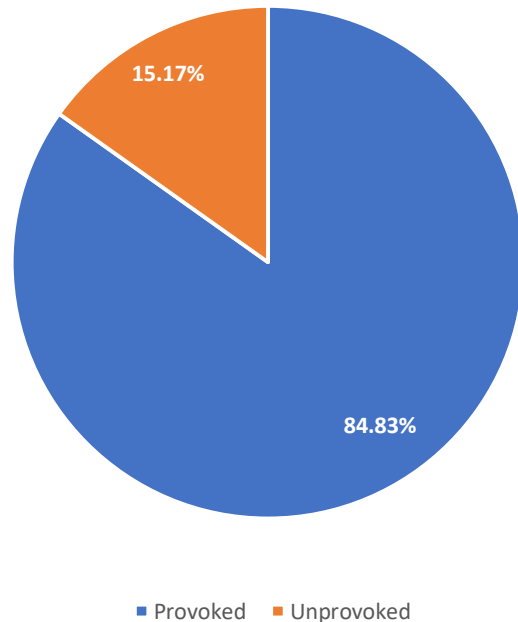


## Proportion of reported animal exposures by location of injury, First Nations communities in Alberta, 2019/20 to 2022/23 combined

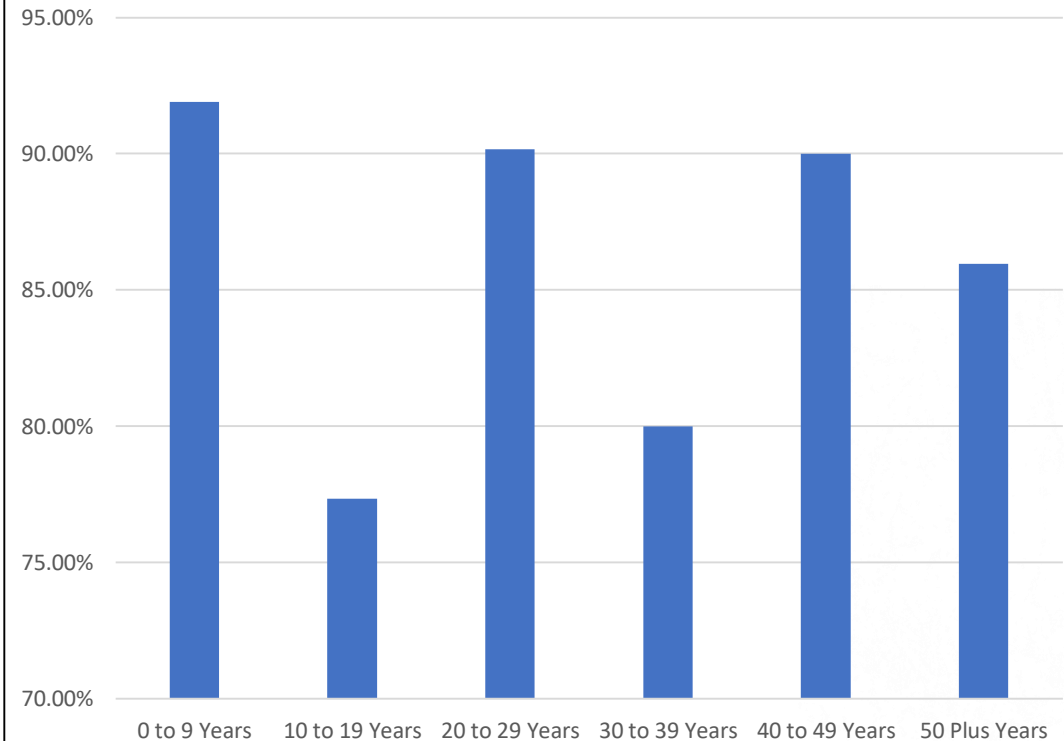


# Animal Exposure Follow Up – Animal Exposure Report: Information About the Incident:

Percentage of Provoked Vs. Unprovoked  
Animal Exposures in First Nation  
Communities 2022-2023



Proportion of Animal Exposures that were  
provoked by Age Group 2022-2023



# Zoonotic/Animals and Human Health Program

- Another major components of this CDC Program Area is the Zoonotic Disease and Animals and Human Health Program.
- Current funding for the Animals and Human Health Program delivered through TSAG.
- This funding is currently allocated to support First Nations and Spay and Neuter Clinics through partnership with the Canadian Animal Task Force (CATF)
- The Spay and Neuter clinics program has been incredibly successful and remains in extremely high demand in First Nations communities

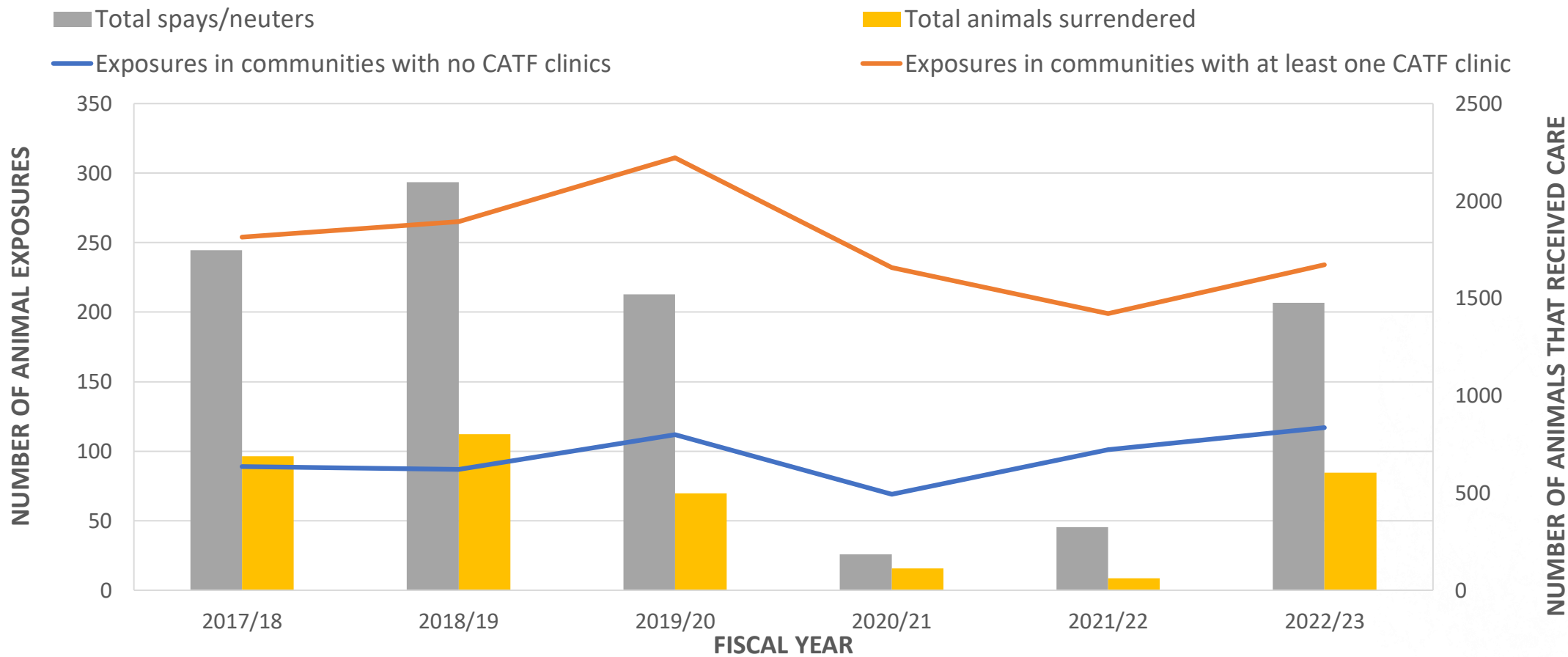


## Number of Reported Animal Exposures Occurring in First Nations Communities in Alberta and the Number of Animals that the Canadian Animal Task Force (CATF) Provided Care for by Fiscal Year

Fiscal Year	Reported Animal Exposures in Communities with no CATF Clinics	Reported Animal Exposures in Communities with CATF Clinics	Animals that were Spayed/ Neutered by CATF	Animals Surrendered	Animals Vaccinated
2017/18	89	254	1,747	689	1,747
2018/19	87	265	2,096	801	2,312
2019/20	112	311	1,519	497	1,519
2020/21	69	232	185	113	185
2021/22	101	199	325	61	325
2022/23	117	234	1,477	603	1,583



# Number of Reported Animal Exposures Occurring in First Nations Communities in Alberta and the Number of Animals that the Canadian Animal Task Force (CATF) Provided Care for by Fiscal Year



# Zoonotic/Animals and Human Health Program

- The defined education and awareness portion of the Animals and Human Health Program was drastically scaled back several years ago due to funding limitations.
- In the summer of 2023, EPHS AB received additional funding in G&Cs to be allocated to the Zoonotic and AHH Program.
- This additional funding will be used towards further supporting the spay and neuter clinics, and re-establishing the education/awareness component of the program.





# Zoonotic/Animals and Human Health Program

## Additional Funding Allocation 2023/ 2024 in G&Cs

Spay and Neuter Clinics Support

Reinstating Awareness and Education Component  
(includes in community education and awareness, new resources and materials including through CATF)



# New Two Page Resource

## Animal Exposures

### What should I do if I've been bitten or scratched by an animal?

- Wash the area with soap and water in order to clean the wound and remove as much of the animal's saliva as possible. Avoid splashing wash water into your eyes, nose or mouth.
- Get the name, address and phone number of the animal owner (if possible).
- See your doctor or visit your local health centre or hospital emergency room to have the wound cared for.

All reported animal exposures are sent to Environmental Public Health Services for follow up to determine if the person involved may have been exposed to rabies.

### What is rabies and why should I be concerned?

Although extremely rare in Alberta, rabies is a fatal yet preventable viral disease that affects the nervous system of warm-blooded animals, including humans. If a person does not receive the appropriate medical care after a potential rabies exposure, the virus can cause disease in the brain, ultimately resulting in death. The need for rabies treatment will depend on:

- the type of animal involved
- where the exposure occurred
- the reason for the exposure (e.g. provoked or unprovoked incident)
- whether the animal is a pet whose health and rabies vaccination status can be determined.

### What happens to the animal involved in a biting or scratching incident?

- A Public Health Nurse (PHN) or Environmental Public Health Officer (EPHO) will contact the owner (if possible) to gather more information about the animal, including the date of the last rabies vaccination, to help determine the risk of rabies in the animal.
- **Domestic** animals (i.e. pets) involved in a bite or scratch incident are confined and observed at their home for a period of 10 days. They are **not** to be euthanized (put down).
- If they are alive and well after this 10-day period, it confirms that they **did not** have rabies at the time of the incident and therefore the person involved will not require treatment for rabies.
- If the animal involved was a wild animal or stray, the risk of rabies is more difficult to assess. The EPHO will consult with the Medical Officer of Health (MOH) to determine if treatment for rabies is recommended.



Canada

### What is the role of the Public Health Nurse or Environmental Public Health Officer when reports of animal exposures are received?

PHNs and EPHOs work to determine if the person involved may have been exposed to rabies. To determine the risk, they will:

#### 1) Contact the individual(s) involved and ask the following questions:

- When and where did the incident occur?
- Can you describe what happened?
- Where did the animal bite or scratch you?
- Where do you live?
- Was the animal a pet, stray, or wild animal? Can you describe it?
- If you know the animal, who do they belong to?
- Did the animal appear unhealthy?
- Was the animal acting strangely?
- Do you know the vaccination status of the animal?
- Can the animal be confined and observed for 10 days?

#### 2) Require that the domestic animal be confined to the owner's property for a 10-day observation period. During this period, it is important that the owner:

- Keep the animal away from other animals and people.
- Keep the animal indoors at night, where possible.
- Immediately call the local health centre or the EPHO On-Call (see contact number below) if the animal appears unwell, escapes, dies or if the animal's behavior changes.

#### 3) Follow up with the animal owner to ensure the animal is alive and well after the 10-day observation period to rule out rabies.

#### 4) Arrange for rabies treatment for clients that may have been exposed to rabies when requested by the MOH.

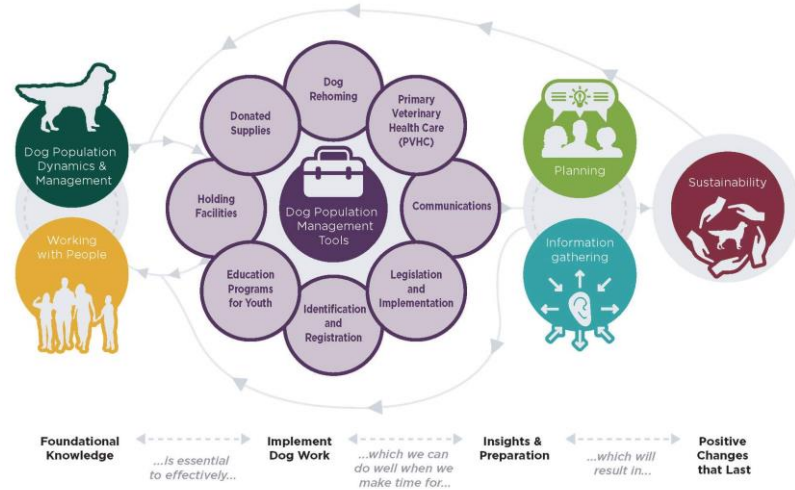
For further information, contact your local Environmental Public Health Officer.

After regular business hours, the EPHO On-Call can be reached at 780-719-8782.

2



# Other Resources



[Dog Care and Management Program | Canadian Animal Task Force \(cataskforce.org\)](https://cataskforce.org)

Indigenous Services Canada Services aux Autochtones Canada

## HANTAVIRUS

What You Need to Know to Prevent Hantavirus Pulmonary Syndrome (HPS)

Environmental Public Health Services  
Health Protection Directorate  
First Nations and Inuit Health Branch  
Suite 730, 9700 Jasper Avenue  
Edmonton, Alberta T5J 4C3



<https://istorystudio.com/graphicnovels/dog-bites-the-gift/>



## Bed Bugs

Bed Bug facts and information on how to protect yourself and your home.



Environmental Public Health Services  
In First Nations communities

Services de santé environnementale et publique  
dans les communautés des Premières Nations



# QUESTIONS/FEEDBACK?

Kyle Wonsiak

Senior Environmental Public Health Officer, Environmental Public Health Services

First Nations and Inuit Health Branch, Alberta Region

Indigenous Services Canada

[kyle.wonsiak@sac-isc.gc.ca](mailto:kyle.wonsiak@sac-isc.gc.ca)

587-987-1317

