

## Animal Rabies in Thailand

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### A. RABIES DIAGNOSTIC LABORATORY SERVICE

**OBJECTIVE :** To provide rabies diagnostic services to U.S. military personnel in Southeast Asia and in the Western Pacific.

**DESCRIPTION :** Every brain submitted to this laboratory was examined by both the fluorescent antibody test and by mouse inoculation. Agreement between the two tests was 99.8%.

**PROGRESS :** Of 805 brain specimens examined, 308 (38.3%) were positive (Table 1). The prevalence of rabies in the dog remains high as in previous years (46.4%), and rabies was diagnosed in a substantial percentage of cats as well (18.3%). Rabies was infrequently diagnosed in other pets or in livestock.

Table 1. Summary of Rabies Diagnoses 1 April 1973—31 March 1974

Species	Number of Specimens	Number Positive	Percent Positive
Canine	605	281	46.4
Feline	109	20	18.3
Equine	4	3	75.0
Human	5	2	40.0
Subhuman Primate	18	1 <sup>a</sup>	5.6
Bovine	2	1	50.0
Rodents	39	0	0
Rabbits	12	0	0
Bats	7	0	0
Other <sup>b</sup>	4	0	0
Total	805	308	38.3

<sup>a</sup> Pet captive gibbon, Bangkok.

<sup>b</sup> Leopard cat, shrew, civet, deer.

## B. SURVEY OF WILD RODENTS FOR RABIES INFECTION

**OBJECTIVE:** To determine the prevalence of rabies in wild rodents in the Chonburi—Rayong area of Thailand.

**DESCRIPTION:** Canine rabies is a major public health problem in the Chonburi—Rayong area of Southeastern Thailand. In 1966, wild rodents, particularly *Bandicota indicus*, which were trapped in this area were reported to be infected with rabies virus (1). In the 1966 survey of 1005 rodents, rabies was reported in *Bandicota indicus* (7.0 per cent), *Rattus rajah* (6.3 per cent), *Rattus norvegicus* (4.7 per cent), *Rattus rattus* (3.5 per cent), *Rattus exulans* (2.5 per cent), and *Bandicota bengalensis* (1.0 per cent).

In 1972 we re-surveyed rodents from this area, capturing animals in many of the same locations and at the same time of year as in the 1966 survey. A total of 704 wild rodents, including 520 *Bandicota indicus* and 184 *Rattus rattus*, were captured in four trapping sites between September and December 1972. During 1973 all of the brains, frozen at the time of capture, were examined for rabies using the fluorescent antibody technique and mouse inoculation.

**PROGRESS:** No evidence of rabies infection was found in any of the 704 rodent brains examined. A virus, which has not as yet been identified, was isolated from the brain of one bandicoot. This virus, which was lethal for mice, was not stainable with fluoresceine isothionate labeled antirabies globulin, and was not neutralized by antirabies immune serum. We conclude that this virus is not serologically related to rabies virus.

**SUMMARY:** Rabies was not found in a survey of 704 wild rodents captured in an area of Southeast Thailand where rodent rabies was reported in 1966.

### REFERENCE:

1. Smith, P.C., Lawhaswasdi, K., Vick, W.E., and Stanton, J.S.: Enzootic Rabies in Rodents in Thailand. *Nature* 217:954—5, 1968.