

REAPPEARANCE OF RABIES IN GREECE

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Introduction

Rabies is an acute viral infectious disease affecting central nervous system. Besides humans it may infect wild, domestic, or productive animals. In Greece no case of rabies in animals has been recorded since 1987 and the last case of infection to humans has been recorded in 1970. Since 2012, 48 cases of rabies cases have been recorded (40 foxes, 5 dogs, 2 cattles and 1 cat) and as a result it alarmed competent state agencies.

Methods

This research is retrospective. The data have been gathered from the existing sources in the Hellenic Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (HCDCP), European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC), World Health Organization (WHO), the Ministry of Rural Development and Food, the Ministry of Health and Social Solidarity.

Results

In Albania and Fyrom, the last decade there have been no cases in humans, while in Turkey 1-2 incidents are reported, because they don't take the appropriate treatment. In Albania, Fyrom and Bulgaria the main reservoir of the disease is the red fox. In Turkey the main reservoir is the dog. (table 1). In Greece, a red fox in the area of Kozani was found positive for rabies virus, on 19 October 2012. Since then, there have been 48 cases, mainly in north Greece. (table 2). The reappearance of the disease can be attributed to various causes, some of which are mentioned above as the presence of rabies in our neighboring countries, the movement of wild animals from these countries to Greece and the collapse of former Yugoslavia that resulted in ineffective control during and after the war. The lack of action by the State is another factor, such as the fact that the passive surveillance system was not functioning as it should and there was a delay of vaccination campaign for red foxes, since airdrops of vaccines in baits started in October of 2013.

Conclusion

Measures to be taken to limit the disease are:

- ❖ Continuous surveillance and vigilance
- ❖ Reduction and vaccination of stray animals
- ❖ Vaccination of wild animals, passive and active surveillance
- ❖ Informing the general public
- ❖ Collaboration between the authorities, medical doctors, veterinarians, Ministry of Rural Development and Food, Ministry of Health, HCDCP
- ❖ Collaboration of Greece with the neighboring countries

Table 1

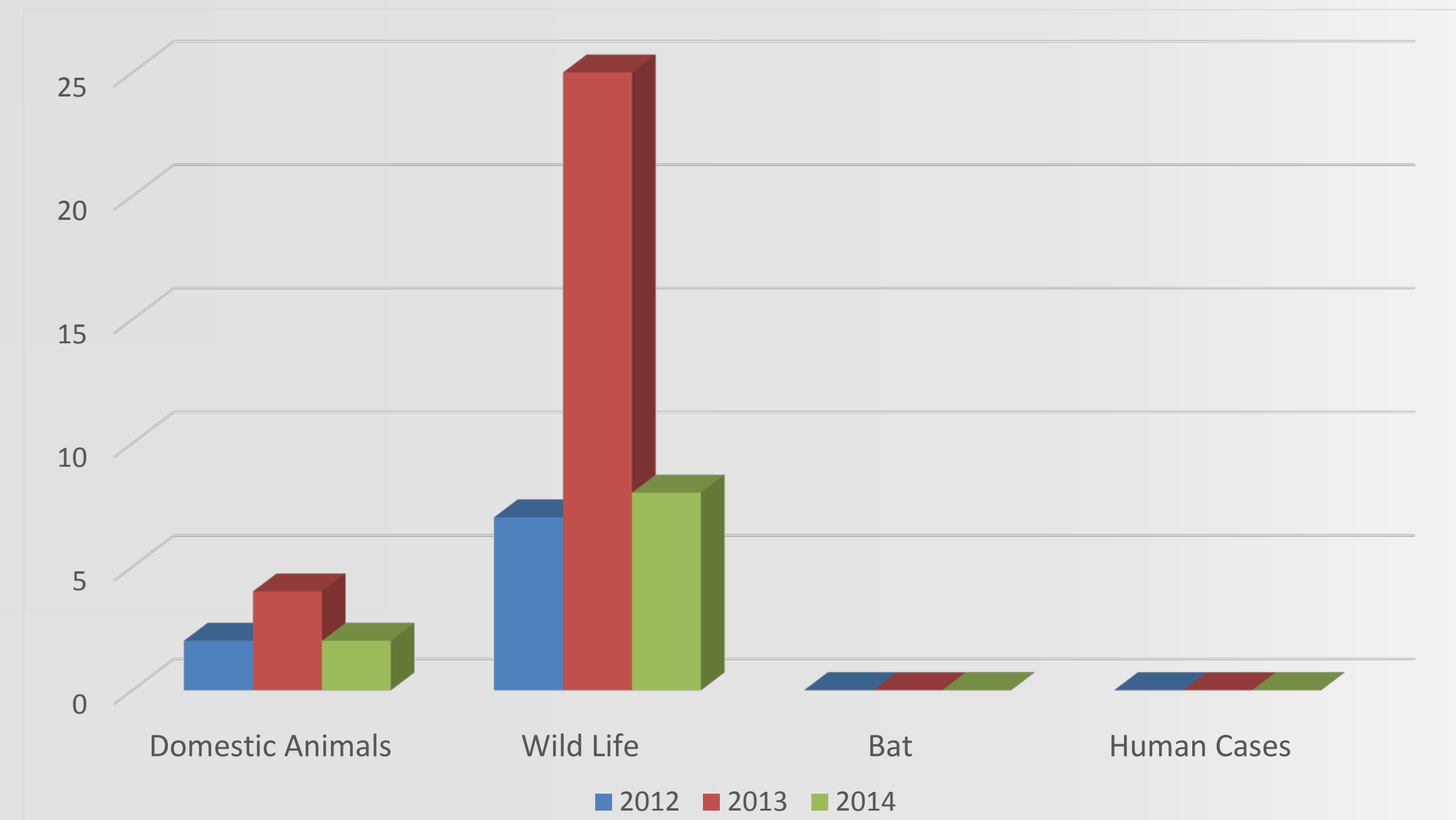
Epidemiology of rabies in Albania, Bulgaria, Fyrom and Turkey from 2012 till 2014

Country	Year	Domestic Animals	Wild Life	Bat	Human Cases	Total
Albania	2012	3	0	0	0	3
Albania	2013	0	0	0	0	0
Bulgaria	2012	0	1	0	0	1
Bulgaria	2013	0	0	0	0	0
Bulgaria	2014	0	2	0	0	0
Fyrom	2012	1	2	0	0	3
Fyrom	2013	0	0	0	0	0
Fyrom	2014	0	0	0	0	0
Turkey	2012	439	57	0	1	497
Turkey	2013	496	54	0	0	550
Turkey	2014	622	93	0	0	715
Total		1569	209	0	1	1771

Source: www.rabies-bulletin-europe.org

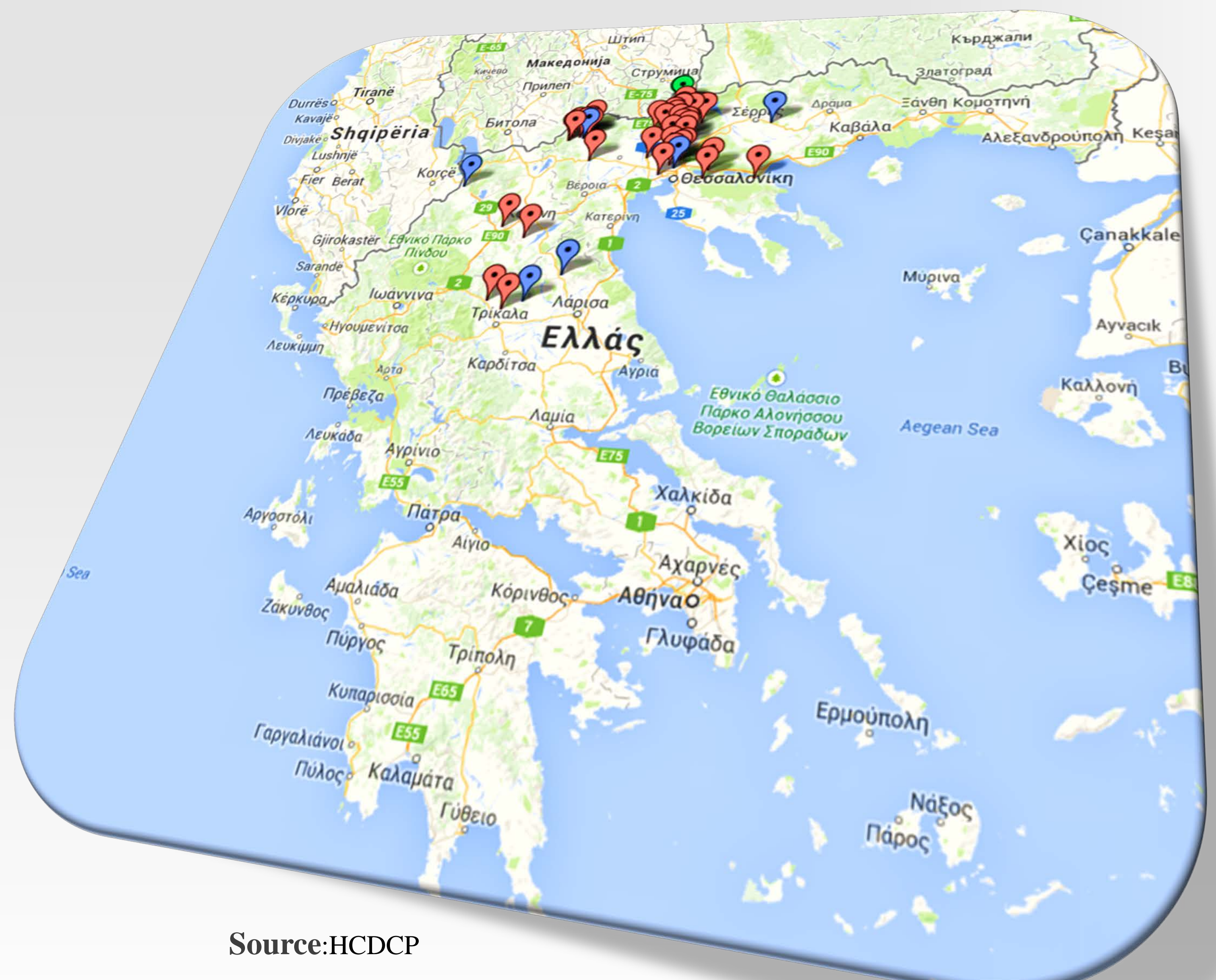
Table 2

Epidemiology of rabies in Greece from 2012 till 2014



Source: www.rabies-bulletin-europe.org

Cases in animals, October 2012 – February 2014



Source: HCDCP