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Subject PRO/AH/EDR> West Nile virus, macaque, zoo - Canada (Toronto)

WEST NILE VIRUS, MACAQUE, ZOO - CANADA (TORONTO)

A ProMED-mail post
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Date: Sat 23 Nov 2002
From: "Dale E. Reddick" <dereddick@islc.net>
Source: CBC News Online, Fri 22 Nov 2002 [edited]
<<http://www.cbc.ca/stories/2002/11/22/apedeadd021122>>

Barbary Macaque in Toronto Zoo Succumbs to West Nile Virus Infection

TORONTO: Officials at the Toronto Zoo are looking into expanding their animal vaccination program after a monkey died as a result of West Nile virus infection. Amos, a Barbary macaque, was put to sleep in August 2002 after becoming very ill. The results of an autopsy were only released Fri 22 Nov 2002.

Since it first surfaced in North America three years ago, West Nile virus has been detected in about 230 species, including horses, birds, reindeer, and even alligators. But zoo officials say this may be the first North American case of the virus showing up in a non-human primate. At 25, Amos is thought to have been one of the oldest Barbary macaques in the world. Scientists say that, just as with humans, his age made him more susceptible to the disease.

"On the whole, the picture of West Nile is like it is in people," said Dr. Ian Barker, a professor at the Ontario Veterinary College in Guelph. "It is only the rare individual that gets infected, and only the rare individual who dies." Still, zoo officials aren't taking any chances. They've previously vaccinated birds, zebras and rhinos. Now, the vaccination program may be extended to cover all 5000 animals at the zoo.

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Dale E. Reddick
<dereddick@islc.net>

[Dale Reddick has added the following commentary: " This CBC report indicates what appears to be the first non-experimental mortality of a non-human primate in the Western Hemisphere due to West Nile virus. The species involved is the Barbary macaque (*Macaca sylvanus*), a close relative to the rhesus macaque (*Macaca mulatta*), which is a principal subject of biomedical research. It may be advisable to have captive populations of NHPs vaccinated against West Nile virus, given what has now been found in Toronto." - Mod.CP]

[see also:
West Nile virus, zoo birds - USA (Washington DC) [20020719.4808](#)
West Nile virus, zoos - USA [20021012.5539](#)
West Nile virus, zoos - USA (02) [20021013.5545](#)
West Nile virus surveillance - Canada (Ontario) [20020603.4389](#)
West Nile virus surveillance - Canada (Ontario) (05) [20020719.4810](#)
West Nile virus update - Canada [20020731.4894](#)
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.....mpp/cp/mpp

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