

Rabbit Hemorrhagic Disease (RHDV2)

SANDAG, SDMMP, and Wildlife Agency Coordination Meeting
August 18, 2021



*Riparian brush rabbit
photo by Moose Peterson*

RHDV2

- ▶ highly contagious and often lethal to wild and domestic rabbits, hares, and pikas
- ▶ “Infected rabbits and jackrabbits may exhibit no symptoms leading up to their sudden death, or may suffer from fever, swelling, internal bleeding and liver necrosis.”
- ▶ Transmitted to rabbits through contact with other infected rabbits or carcass-es, their meat or their fur, contaminated food or water, or materials coming into contact with them
- ▶ Virus can persist in the environment for a very long time, making disease control efforts extremely challenging once in wild rabbit populations
- ▶ A risk to endangered species (riparian bush rabbit) and those with limited distribution in the state

Timeline

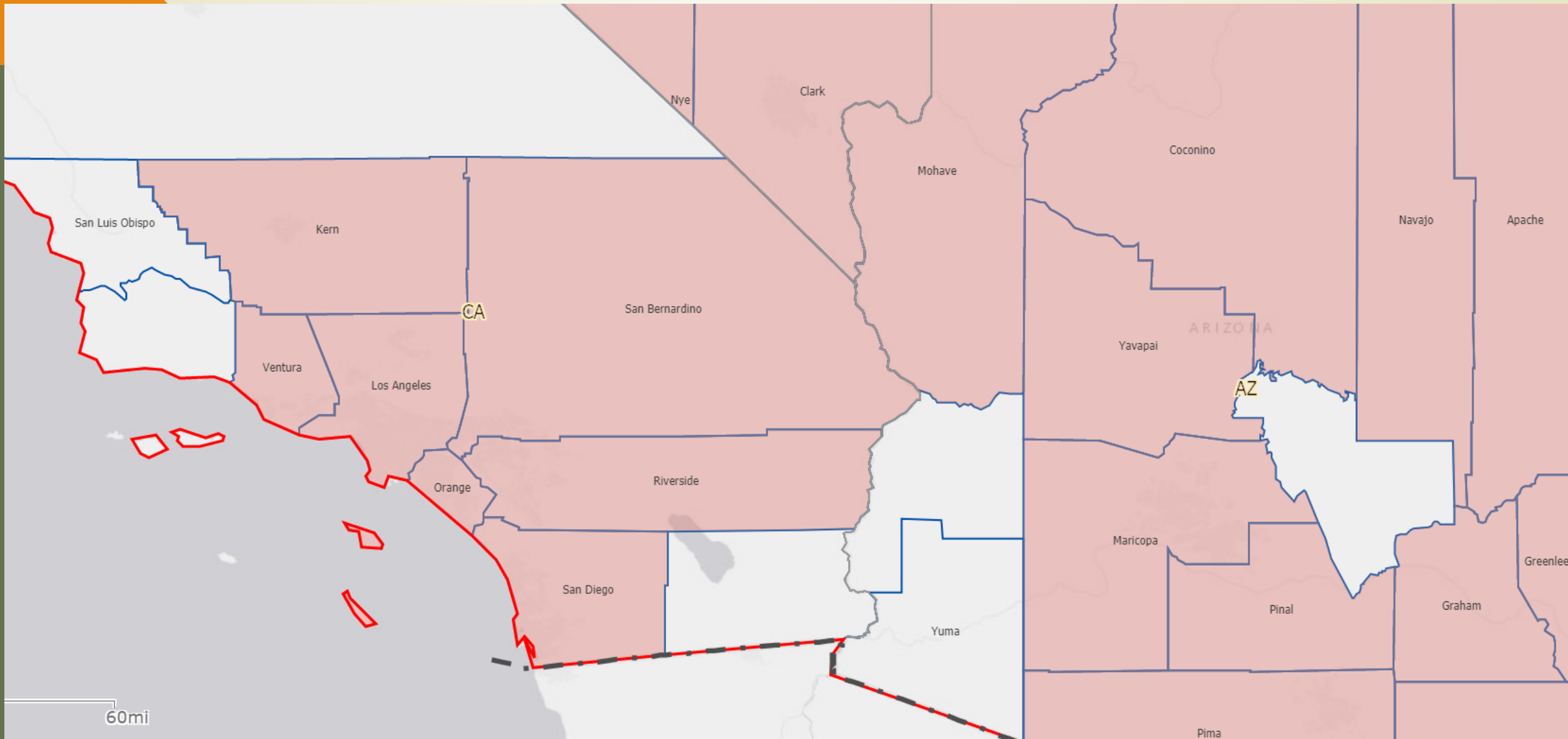
- **May 2020**- RHDV2 detected in Palm Springs
- **June 2020** – RHDV2 detected in Poway (desert cottontail)
- **Feb. 8, 2021**- RHDV2 detected in Santee (black-tailed jackrabbits)
- **March 18, 2021** – Rancho Jamul Ecological Reserve (desert cottontails)
- **March 18, 2021** - Borrego Springs on March 18 (black-tailed jackrabbit)
- **April 8, 2021** - Canada de San Vicente Ecological Reserve in Ramona (desert cottontail)



Distribution

- Mexico, and in New Mexico, Colorado, Arizona and Texas
- California Counties:
 - Alameda (June 2021)
 - Kern
 - Ventura
 - Los Angeles
 - Orange
 - Riverside
 - San Bernardino
 - San Diego
 - Imperial

Wild & Feral Domestic Presence March 2020-July 10, 2021



BMPs

Recommendations from: Deana Clifford, Senior Wildlife Veterinarian, Wildlife Investigations Lab, CDFW

- ▶ Please consider carefully where you and/or your staff and vehicles may go (or have gone) after visiting a site with known RHDV2. Even if just driving through, tires are a source of spread.
- ▶ A spray bottle of 10% bleach and water in every vehicle is recommended. Spray tires and bottoms of shoes after you visit, at the very least.
- ▶ If there's a cluster of carcasses, deep bury to get off the landscape. At minimum, avoid stepping in areas and contact with carcasses or disinfect with bleach.
- ▶ If you have staff traveling and working or recreating in outdoor areas of counties that don't yet have the disease (everything north and west of Kern Co at this point):
 - ▶ strongly recommend they ensure their footwear is cleaned (10% bleach spray)
 - ▶ clothes washed
 - ▶ consider disinfecting tires if going from within the reserve to areas where no known mortalities are occurring or RHDV2 – negative counties.
- ▶ If staff have domestic rabbits at home, have dedicated work clothing and leave it at work (and launder it at the facility if that is available).



Next Steps

- ▶ Encourage monitoring and reporting (online mortality reports, CDFW)
 - ▶ Survey for live rabbits?
- ▶ Update maps of known positive cases
 - ▶ What is the turnaround time?
- ▶ Preserves should post information about the harmfulness of RHDV2 and whether the preserve has known cases
 - ▶ Any potential to add sanitation stations to trailheads?