

Wild American mink found with Covid-19: first report of SARS-CoV-2 in a free-ranging wild animal

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A single free-ranging wild American mink *Neovison vison* testing positive for Covid-19 has been identified during US Department of Agriculture (USDA) epidemiological monitoring in the vicinity of an infected mink farm in Utah (Briggs 2020; Maron 2020; ProMED 2020). Other wild meso-carnivores and other species tested by the USDA were negative for the virus.

In spite of the general understanding that Covid-19 is a zoonotic disease (e.g. WHO 2020), the infected mink is the first “free-ranging, native wild animal confirmed with SARS-CoV-2”, according to a statement issued by the USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (ProMED 2020). USDA spokespeople aver that “There is currently no evidence that SARS-CoV-2 is circulating or has been established in wild populations surrounding the infected mink farms” (ProMED 2020).

Covid-19 has run rampant in mink farms in the US and Europe, as has been widely reported in the media (see recent News items in this journal).

References

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Contributed by Helle V. Goldman, Norwegian Polar Institute, Fram Centre, P.O. Box 6606 Langnes, NO-9296 Tromsø, Norway, goldman@npolar.no.