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RABID RACCOON CAPTURED IN CEDAR GROVE

*Rabies Alert Extended After Fifth Rabid Animal Identified
in Bay County Since January*



Contact:

Krista Cogburn-Peebles

Krista.Cogburn-Peebles@FLHealth.gov

850-252-9600

Panama City, Fla.—A raccoon captured near East 11th Street and Everitt Avenue has tested positive for rabies. Rabies is a **fatal** viral infection of the nervous system that is transmitted from **animal to animal or animal to human** by bite, scratch, or mucous membrane exposure to infected saliva.

A county-wide rabies alert issued last week after a fourth animal tested positive for rabies has been extended for another 60 days. A rabid raccoon was killed by dogs off Oakenshaw Drive in Youngstown last week. Last month a rabid raccoon was killed by a dog along Sukoshi Drive in Callaway. A rabies alert was issued for Northern Bay County in early March after a second gray fox was killed north of Edwards Road in the Southport area.

Florida law requires dogs and cats four months or older be vaccinated by a licensed veterinarian against rabies. Unvaccinated dogs and cats should be kept indoors. Cats are the domestic animal most likely to be infected with rabies. Keep cats indoors. Do not touch wild animals or stray cats or dogs. No animal is too young to have rabies. Never touch a bat!

The Florida Department of Health would like to remind citizens that it is unintentionally or unintentionally feeding raccoons is prohibited in Florida. Feed dogs and cats indoors and keep garbage covered. Feeding raccoons concentrates raccoons at abnormally high densities and increases the likelihood of rabies transmission from raccoon-to-raccoon and raccoon-to-dogs, cats, and people. Infected raccoons may appear normal. Relocating an infected raccoon can spread rabies.

If bitten or scratched by an animal, wash the wound immediately with soap and water. Seek medical treatment as needed and report the injury to the Florida Department of Health in Bay County at (850) 872-4455. If the animal is stray or wild, call 911 or Bay County Animal Services at (850) 767-3333 and report the animal's location. In the City of Lynn Haven, call the Lynn Haven Police Department at (850) 265-1112. Follow up. Rabies is preventable when treatment is provided in a timely manner.

The following advice is issued:

- If your dog or cat fights with a wild animal, contact the Florida Department of Health in Bay County immediately. The wild animal will need to be tested for rabies. Your animal may need to be quarantined. Do not shoot suspected rabid animals in the head.
- **Do not touch animals that are not yours.** Avoid contact with **all** wildlife, especially raccoons, bats, bobcats, otters, foxes, skunks and coyotes. No animal is too young to have rabies. A rabid animal may act friendly.
 - Wear rubber gloves and protective eyewear when dressing/butchering wild animals to avoid exposure to rabies and other diseases.
 - Cook all meat thoroughly to 165 degrees.
 - Do not hunt animals that appear sick.
- For general questions pertaining to stray animals or odd acting wild animals, contact your area's animal control department.
- For questions regarding the health of a pet, contact a veterinarian.
- Teach your children about rabies and to **NEVER TOUCH A BAT!**

For further information on rabies, go to the Florida Department of Health website at <http://www.doh.state.fl.us/environment/medicine/rabies/rabies-index.html> or contact the Florida Department of Health in Bay County at 850-872-4720 or follow us on Twitter @FLHealthEmerald.

About the Florida Department of Health

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