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RABID RACCOON CAPTURED IN THE COVE AREA OF PANAMA CITY

This is Bay County's sixth laboratory confirmed rabid animal for 2018.



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Panama City, Fla.— A raccoon captured in an area near the intersection of Cove Boulevard and Cherry Street has tested positive for rabies. This is the sixth laboratory confirmed rabid animal for Bay County in 2018 and the second for *The Cove*. A rabid raccoon was captured north of Merriam Cherry Street Elementary School in February. 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.

Florida law requires dogs and cats four months or older be vaccinated by a licensed veterinarian against rabies. Cats are the domestic animal most likely to be infected with rabies. Keep cats indoors.

Intentionally or unintentionally feeding raccoons is illegal 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-pets and people.

Do not relocate raccoons to other areas. Infected raccoons may appear normal. Relocating an infected raccoon can spread rabies.

To avoid being bitten:

- Do not approach stray pets or wildlife.
- Do not feed or attempt to pet or handle stray pets or wildlife.
- Do not disturb an animal that is sleeping, eating or caring for its young.
- If a strange animal walks toward you, stay calm and slowly move away.

If you are bitten by a stray or wild animal, call 911.

- Take care of the bite wound:
- Before treating the wound, wash your hands with soap and clean fresh water.
- Remove any item that is in the way of caring for the wound.

- Put pressure on the wound with a clean cloth to stop bleeding.
- After the bleeding has stopped, pour bottled or clean running water over the wound.
- Gently clean around the wound with soap and clean water.
- Pat dry and use an adhesive bandage or dry clean cloth to cover the wound.
- Leave unclean wounds open.

Report the bite to your local animal control agency. Bay County Animal Service can be reached at 850-767-3333. In Lynn Haven, call the Lynn Haven Police Department at 850-265-1112. Tell the animal control official everything you know about the animal and where it went. Also report the injury to the Florida Department of Health in Bay County at 850-872-4455. Follow up. Rabies is preventable when treatment is provided in a timely manner.

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.

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