

March 7, 2019

## RABIES ALERT ISSUED FOR NORTHERN BAY COUNTY AREA

*Second rabid fox confirmed in Bay County in 2019.*



### Contact:

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**Panama City, Fla.**—The Florida Department of Health in Bay County is issuing a rabies alert. This follows a second gray fox that was confirmed to have rabies in the area of northern Bay County off the north end of Resota Beach Road. The first case was in mid-February off Prosper Road east of Lake Merial. The rabies alert is for 60 days and includes the following boundaries in northern Bay County:

- West of Highway 2301
- East of Highway 79
- North of Edwards Road
- South of Highway 20

This is Bay County's third laboratory confirmed rabid animal of 2019. In late February, a raccoon was killed by a dog in Callaway. 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. Unvaccinated dogs and cats should not be outdoors. 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.

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.

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