



News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 25, 2014

Animal Control

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Suspected Rabies Case In Cumberland County

FAYETTEVILLE - This afternoon the State Public Health Lab in Raleigh reported an “unsatisfactory result” of rabies in Cumberland County. For public safety and health reasons, Animal Control and the Department of Public Health treat inconclusive or unsatisfactory results as positive and notify the public.

A stray kitten bit a man who was attempting to care for the severely injured animal’s leg. The incident happened on N.C. Hwy 242, Elizabethtown Road, in Roseboro in Cumberland County. The man shot the kitten and after burying the animal later decided to contact Animal Control, which sent the cat for testing. The results were determined unsatisfactory because of decomposition. The man is receiving post rabies exposure medical treatment.

“This is a good time to remind citizens that anytime you approach an injured animal whose rabies history is unknown, you are exposing yourself to possible rabies and to having to receive post-exposure prophylactic rabies treatment,” said Animal Control Director Dr. John Lauby.

This is the eighth case of rabies in the county since January 1.

All pet owners are urged to check the vaccination status of their pets. If pets are not vaccinated or are due for a booster shot, they should be taken to a local veterinarian for rabies vaccination immediately.

The first sign of rabies in animals is a change in behavior. Animals may become aggressive, attacking for no reason, or they may become very quiet. Wild animals can lose their fear of people and act tame. Rabid animals may walk in a circle, drag a leg, or fall over. Some cannot swallow so they are not able to eat or drink and often drool. Animals usually die within a week after first becoming ill.

Avoiding wild animals and keeping your distance from stray dogs and cats is the first step in preventing an animal bite. Any pet, which appears to have been in a fight while outside, should be handled very cautiously and seen by a veterinarian.

If you are bitten or scratched by an animal:

- Immediately wash the wound under running water for at least 10 minutes with lots of soap. Seek medical attention/advice.

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- Call Animal Control at 321-6852 Monday-Friday 8 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Call the Sheriff's Office at 323-1500 after 5 p.m., weekends and holidays.
- Go to the emergency room.

It is also important to vaccinate your pets for rabies and keep their shots current. Pet owners are reminded that all dogs and cats must be vaccinated against rabies, as required by state law. Pet owners are subject to a fine of \$100 for each unvaccinated dog or cat. Pets must be vaccinated when they reach the age of four months.