



# News Release

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

July 7, 2016

Animal Control

Contact: Dr. John Lauby, Director

Telephone: 910-321-6856

E-mail: [jlauby@co.cumberland.nc.us](mailto:jlauby@co.cumberland.nc.us)

## **Cat Tests Positive For Rabies in Cumberland County**

FAYETTEVILLE – The State Public Health Lab in Raleigh today reported a positive rabies result in a kitten from Cumberland County. Animal Control picked up a kitten on Wednesday, July 6, at the Animal Hospital of Fayetteville on Fort Bragg Road.

The kitten, which was approximately 4 months old, got into an altercation with an unknown animal sometime around May 25. The owner took the kitten to the Animal Hospital of Fayetteville for treatment of bite wounds to the rear limb and a fractured tibia. The cat had been seen and treated multiple times for its injuries.

Veterinarian staff reported that neurological symptoms appeared on July 4 or 5. The kitten's owner resides on Pecan Drive, off of McPherson Avenue, in Fayetteville. The owner was informed that the cat needed to be euthanized and sent for testing.

Animal Control has notified eight people that they must receive rabies post-exposure treatment. The owner and three employees of the animal hospital were bitten and/or scratched. Two other employees, the owner's roommate and a friend also handled the cat. It has also been confirmed today that there is an unvaccinated cat and ferret in the residence.

This is the fifth case of rabies in the county in 2016.

**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:

**-more-**

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