

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 21, 2005

**FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:
CUMBERLAND COUNTY ANIMAL CONTROL –PHONE: 321-6852**

**FOURTH CONFIRMED CASE OF RABIES
IN CUMBERLAND COUNTY FOR 2005**

This evening the State Public Health Lab in Raleigh confirmed the 4th case of rabies in Cumberland County for 2005. A bat was brought in to Animal Control from 809 Westmont Drive on Saturday April 9, 2005. Residents in the vicinity of Haymount Subdivision between Hay Street and Bragg Boulevard should remain alert for sick or abnormal acting wildlife. Cumberland County Animal Control officials will be in the vicinity to alert residents of the incident.

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 any local Veterinarian for rabies vaccinations 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 with lots of soap and water. Seek medical attention/advice.
- Call Animal Control at 321-6852 Monday – Friday 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Call 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 NC State law. Pet owners are subject to a fine of \$100.00 for each unvaccinated dog or cat. Pets must be vaccinated when they reach the age of four months.