



News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Animal Control

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SUSPECTED CASE OF RABIES IN CUMBERLAND COUNTY

FAYETTEVILLE – Cumberland County Animal Control officers are considering a second bat found this week as a suspected case of rabies. This afternoon the State Public Health Lab in Raleigh reported a “test not performed” of a bat sent for testing on Tuesday, July 9. The lab could not complete the test because the brain matter was too dry. For public safety reasons, local officials are treating this as a suspected case of rabies.

The dead bat was brought to Animal Control from Putt Lane in the Cypress Lakes area. Animal Control officers will be in the area today alerting residents of the case.

This is the seventh case of rabies in the county since Jan. 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.
- 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.

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