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BAT TESTS POSITIVE FOR RABIES LOXAHATCHEE



Contact:

Public Information

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PALM BEACH COUNTY, FL- Florida Department of Health Laboratory confirmed today that a bat discovered and captured Thursday, October 8 in Loxahatchee was positive for rabies.

Animal Care and Control responded to a complaint near Chestnut Court in unincorporated Palm Beach County about a dog that spotted a lethargic bat. The dog owner contained the bat and turned it over to an Animal Care and Control Officer for testing. There was no human exposure and the dog is current on its rabies vaccines but will be under precautionary home quarantine for observation the next 45 days. .

According to the Florida Department of Health in Palm Beach County this is the fifth confirmed rabid animal this year in the county. Residents in the Loxahatchee area should be aware that rabies is in the wild animal population and take all of the necessary precautions to avoid contact.

Rabies is a disease of the nervous system and is fatal to warm blooded animals and humans. The only treatment for human exposure to rabies is rabies-specific immune globulin and rabies immunization. Appropriate treatment started soon after the exposure will protect an exposed person from the disease. The following advice is issued:

- Keep rabies vaccinations up to date for all pets.
- Keep your pets under direct supervision so they do not come in contact with wild animals. If your pet is bitten by a wild animal, seek veterinary assistance for the animal immediately and contact Animal Care & Control at 561-233-1200.
- Call your local animal control agency to remove any stray animals from your neighborhood.
- Spay or neuter your pets to help reduce the number of unwanted pets that may not be properly cared for or regularly vaccinated.
- **Do not** handle, feed, or unintentionally attract wild animals with open garbage cans or litter.
- **Never** adopt wild animals or bring them into your home.
- Teach children **never** to handle unfamiliar animals, wild or domestic, even if they appear friendly.

- Prevent bats from entering living quarters or occupied spaces in homes, churches, schools, and other similar areas where they might come in contact with people and pets.

For further information on rabies, go to the Florida Department of Health website:

<http://www.floridahealth.gov/diseases-and-conditions/rabies/index.html>

or contact the Florida Health Palm Beach County, 561-840-4500. Animals exhibiting signs of sickness and aggressive behavior should be reported to Animal Control at 561-233-1200.

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