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Raccoon TESTS POSITIVE FOR RABIES West Palm Beach

Contact:

Public Information

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West Palm Beach, FL- Florida Department of Health Laboratory confirmed today that a raccoon that was acting aggressive and bit a woman this week in West Palm Beach has tested positive for rabies. The woman has begun her rabies shot series.

Animal Care & Control was notified Thursday that a raccoon in the vicinity of Palm Beach Lakes Blvd. and I-95 was acting aggressive and chasing a number of neighbors. Upon arrival the Animal Care Officer found the raccoon dead in the bite victim's backyard from being struck with a shovel and witnessed the bite marks on the woman. Fortunately, this was the only human exposure. The woman has been placed on the series of preventive rabies shots.

According to the Florida Department of Health in Palm Beach County this is the second confirmed rabid animal this year in the county. Residents in the area of Palm Beach Lakes Blvd. and I-95 should take necessary precautions to avoid contact with any wild animals.

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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