

Baca County Division of Emergency Management
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MEDIA RELEASE: **For Immediate Release**

October 30, 2007

**Baca County Officials Advise Residents of Confirmed Rabies Positive
Skunk in Neighboring Las Animas County**

On October 23, a skunk collected from the Trinchera area in Las Animas County tested positive for rabies at the CSU Veterinary Diagnostic lab. The animal was killed after exhibiting aggressive behavior and trying to bite two dogs. The owner of the dogs shot the skunk and took the carcass to a local veterinarian who submitted the animal for testing.

This represents the fourth positive skunk reported in Colorado since June this year; three cases have come from eastern Colorado counties (Prowers, Washington and Las Animas). Further testing will be done by CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) on the animal carcass to determine the strain of rabies that infected the animal.

Riley Frazee from Baca County Division of Emergency Management advises Baca County residents to be cautious with wild animals. Signs of rabies to watch for in animals include abnormal behavior, like being active in the day for nocturnal species; approaching humans or animals; difficulty with walking or movement; and unusual vocalization (like excessive bellowing in cows or hissing/chirping in bats). Such signs are an indication the animal is ill.

Some animals with rabies will be very aggressive (furious rabies) while others may appear almost catatonic (dumb rabies). Pets acting outside of their usual behavior should be examined by a veterinarian. Suspected rabid animals should be avoided and reported to the local authorities. Frazee also advises all pet owners to maintain current rabies vaccinations to protect their animals and themselves.

For more information contact the Division of Emergency Management at 719-523-6796 or the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment at (303) 692-2700.

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