

Baca County Division of Emergency Management

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RABIES CONFIRMED IN BACA COUNTY

(SPRINGFIELD, COLORADO) On June 26th a skunk from Baca County tested positive for rabies at the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) Laboratory in Denver.

The Division of Emergency Management was contacted by an area resident on June 24th regarding a skunk, which had been found dead in a dog pen Emergency Management collected the skunk and it was immediately submitted for testing.

The County Board of Health is encouraging all citizens to vaccinate their dogs and cats against rabies as soon as possible. To vaccinate your dog or cat please call your local veterinary office to schedule an appointment.

The County Board of Health has also asked that citizens avoid contact with rabid wildlife in the area. Wildlife and domestic animals exhibiting unusual behavior should be reported to authorities. It is important to know what to look for and what to do if you encounter a rabid animal.

Residents with concerns about possible exposure to rabies and questions about rabies can call the Baca County Nursing Service Office at 719-523-6621.

Signs that wildlife may have rabies:

- Wild animals which seem to be friendly, tame or show no fear of people
- Nocturnal animals – coyotes, foxes, bats, skunks, and raccoons – that are active during the day
- Animals that appear to be “drunk” – staggering movements while walking
- Skunks attacking other animals – cows, goats, dogs, etc.

Signs that cats and dogs may have rabies:

- Changes in normal behavior – a shy dog becoming aggressive or a friendly dog becoming withdrawn
- Difficulty chewing, swallowing, or drinking
- Animals that appear to be “drunk” – staggering movements while walking
- Paralysis
- Restlessness and irritability

- Excess salivation and choking sounds like something is stuck in their throat

Signs that livestock may have rabies:

- Excessive drooling and abnormal swallowing
- Constant or abnormal vocalization and/or appear to be choking
- Abnormal posture and wobbliness in the hindquarters, difficulty standing or walking
- Unexplained aggressiveness

What to do if you encounter a potentially rabid animal:

- Do not approach or attempt to handle a live animal
- Keep children, pets, and livestock away
- If a person or animal is bitten contact the Baca County Sheriffs Office at 719-523-4511 or the Baca County Nursing Service at 719-523-6621.
- In order for an animal to be tested for rabies the brain must be intact (i.e. don't shoot animals in their head). Do not handle the carcass without waterproof gloves. Use a shovel to place the carcass in a plastic bag.
- If you encounter a potentially rabid animal call 719-523-4511.

The Baca County Sheriffs Office asks that wildlife not exhibiting signs listed above be left alone in their natural habitat.

For more information about rabies, go to <http://www.cdphe.state.co.us/dc/zoonosis/rabies/index.html>

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