

Press Release: For Immediate Release

Raccoon Tests Positive for Rabies in Warren County, NC
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On the morning of September 16, 2015 residents of Holiday Drive in Macon, NC were alerted by the sounds of a pet dog barking in an agitated manner. Upon inspection, the residents observed their dog pulling a tarp and exposing a dying young raccoon. Animal Control was contacted and retrieved the animal. The raccoon was submitted to the NC State Laboratory of Public Health where it was found to be positive for rabies.

The resident's 2 pet dogs were found to be current on their rabies vaccines and will have their rabies vaccinations updated.

All County residents are strongly recommended to ensure their dogs and cats are kept current on rabies vaccinations and kept upon the owner's property. If unsure about a pet's vaccination status, simply revaccinate the animal. Administering a rabies booster early will not harm the pet.

Dogs and cats that have been vaccinated against rabies at least 28 days prior to exposure to a rabid animal only require a rabies booster within 5 days of the exposure. Dogs and cats that are not current on their rabies vaccinations who come into contact with rabid, or suspected rabid animals, such as the raccoon, fox, skunk or bat must be quarantined for 6 months at the owner's expense or euthanized.

Rabies has been recorded as early as 2000 BC and remains a serious public health and safety threat that requires persistent control activities and community involvement. North Carolina has reported over 247 rabid animals thus far for the year 2015, almost 50% were raccoons and the cat still surpasses the dog in numbers reported as rabid.

Rabies in animals and humans has been dramatically reduced through enactment and enforcement of rabies vaccination laws for dogs and cats, leash laws and vaccine improvement. Despite these vast improvements, over 55,000 people worldwide die from the disease every year. Human infection in the United States is now considered rare but not eliminated.

As natural environments and animal habitats are degraded, reduced or eliminated, wild animals are forced to share the environment with humans; scavenging for food and living quarters in human communities. Dog and cat owners who fail to spay or neuter their pets add to the pet overpopulation, many of which are not vaccinated against rabies or other diseases and compete with wild animals for resources.

Residents who dispose of food scraps by tossing it into open spaces, such as yards or feed stray dogs, cats and wildlife such as the raccoon, skunk or fox are potentially endangering public safety by attracting potentially rabid animals and supporting an environment that encourages rabies distribution.

North Carolina law and the Warren County Animal Control ordinance mandates that all dogs and cats 4 months of age or older be vaccinated against rabies to protect animals and humans. Dogs and cats can be vaccinated as early as 3 months of age.

Pet owners are encouraged to visit their veterinarian or visit the Warren County Animal Ark for rabies vaccinations for dogs and cats. Warren County offers 1 year rabies vaccinations for \$6 from 11 am to 4 pm Monday through Friday, excepting holidays. The Animal Control-Animal Ark office is located at 142 Rafters Lane, Warrenton, off of Hwy 43/58 South, east of the Town of Warrenton and can be contacted at 252.257.6137.

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