



Press Release

Rabies Positive Raccoon Found in Macon County

Macon County has identified an additional rabies positive raccoon, bring the total of rabies positive wildlife detected in Macon County to eight since December 2020. The raccoon was seen acting erratically and was killed on a citizen's property. The animal was picked up by Macon County Animal Services and sent for testing. There is no known exposure to humans or pets. The incident occurred in the Franklin Township of the county.

While rabies is endemic to bats, skunks, and raccoons in North Carolina, the best prevention is the rabies vaccination. In light of recent rabies positive animals, Macon County Animal Services will be sponsoring low-cost rabies vaccination clinics at local schools on March 27th and April 10th. More details can be found on Macon County Animal Services Facebook page. Macon County residents are encouraged to ensure that their animals are up-to-date on all vaccinations.

Macon County Animal Services Section Administrator, Dr. Villiard, said of the incident, "Given the dramatic increase in detected rabies in wildlife in Macon County, it is critical that pets are vaccinated against rabies and that their rabies shots are current. This helps protect them as well as their owners from exposure to rabies."

Rabies is a virus that affects the nervous system in humans and other mammals. A person may contract rabies through a bite, scratch, or saliva from an infected animal. Potential rabies exposure should never be taken lightly; left untreated, rabies is fatal.

Animals do not have to be aggressive or behaving erratically to have the rabies virus. Changes in any animal's normal behavior can be early signs of rabies. Any exposure to these animals should be reported to Macon County Animal Services, so that the animal can be located and tested for rabies. Macon County pet owners should also be sure to check their pet's last rabies vaccination is up-to-date, to prevent a possible rabies infection.

In addition to keeping your pets vaccinated, pet owners should keep cats and ferrets indoors and keep dogs under direct supervision, by spaying or neutering their pets to help reduce the number of unwanted pets that may not be properly cared for or vaccinated regularly, and call animal control to remove all stray animals from their neighborhood since these animals may be unvaccinated or ill.

Every day citizens should also be sure to prevent rabies in themselves by leaving wildlife alone, wash animal bites and scratches with soap and water, vaccinating pets, and contacting your healthcare provider immediately after you are bitten, scratched, or otherwise exposed to an animal who may be positive for rabies. Rabies in people is preventable through prompt medical care.

Animal Services is open on Monday through Friday from 9:00am to 4:00pm, closing daily for lunch from 12:00pm to 1:00pm. Due to COVID-19, appointments are required, and can be made the same day. Macon County Animal Services can be reached at 828-349-2106.

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