



Connie Beck, Director
Social Services | Public Health | Mental Health

news release

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Fortuna fox tests positive for rabies *Health officials stress importance of vaccinating pets*

A fox believed to have bitten a Fortuna teen and behaved aggressively at two locations has tested positive for rabies. The test was performed today at the Department of Health & Human Services (DHHS) Public Health Laboratory in Eureka.

The two incidents took place in the 6500 block of Rohnerville Road. Investigators believe the same fox was likely involved in both encounters.

"We all need to be aware of the signs that an animal may be dangerous and take the appropriate steps to stay safe, especially in our rural area," said 2nd District Supervisor Estelle Fennell, adding that her heart goes out to the teen who went through this difficult experience.

The fox reportedly bit the teenager shortly after chasing a neighbor's cat and running into a house. The fox then reportedly charged a homeowner, who shot the animal in the head. The teenager has received prophylactic treatment. No one else was injured.

Experts say rabies is always present in the wildlife population throughout Humboldt County, especially among skunks, bats and foxes.

Preventive measures include avoiding contact with wild and stray animals, bringing pet foods indoors at night, reporting animal bites to your county or municipal animal control officer, and if you are bitten, washing the bite immediately with soap and water and seeking medical attention.

Public Health officials stressed the importance of fully vaccinating domestic animals against rabies, including dogs, cats and select livestock.

Reduced-cost vaccinations are available throughout the county. A list of discounted vaccination clinics through the middle of June is posted on DHHS's Facebook page at www.facebook.com/humcodhhs.

Questions about rabies may be directed to the DHHS Division of Environmental Health at 707-445-6215 or toll free at 800-963-9241.

Previously:

Possible rabies exposure in Fortuna area

On Wednesday, the Humboldt County Department of Health & Human Services was notified of two encounters with an aggressive fox along Rohnerville Road in the Fortuna area. In one incident, a teenager was bitten by a fox. The teenager has received prophylactic treatment. In the other incident nearby, no one was bitten, and a fox was shot and killed. Investigators think it's likely the same fox was involved in both encounters.

The dead fox has been sent to the Public Health Laboratory for testing for rabies. Because the fox was shot in the brain, which is used for testing, the results may be inconclusive. We hope to have results later today. We will issue a second release at that time along with additional information about protecting your family from rabies.

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