



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

news release

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Hydesville dogs attacked by rabid foxes

Two dogs from the Hydesville area were attacked by foxes that subsequently tested positive for rabies. Both dogs have been placed under 30-day, strict isolation quarantines. One of the incidents involved human exposures, with two people now receiving prophylactic treatment.

In addition to these incidents, a bat in the Eureka area has tested positive for rabies, and the remains of a skunk, a second bat and a third Hydesville fox are currently being tested at the Department of Health & Human Services Public Health Laboratory in Eureka.

So far this year, 25 specimens have been tested for rabies.

Public Health officials caution against shooting animals in the head. "Because intact brain tissue is needed for an accurate lab test, shooting an animal in the head can delay and disrupt results," said Supervising Environmental Health Specialist Amanda Ruddy.

When a test is incomplete or inconclusive, the specimen is treated as if rabid, leading to potentially unnecessary courses of action such as human prophylaxis and animal quarantines.

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 stress the importance of fully vaccinating domestic animals against rabies, including dogs, cats and select livestock.

For questions about rabies or to report a rabid animal, please call the DHHS Division of Environmental Health at 707-445-6215 or toll free at 1-800-963-9241.

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