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**Administration Building**

406 Craven Street
New Bern, NC 28560
Fax 252-636-2728
hr@cravencountync.gov

Commissioners 252-636-6601
Manager 252-636-6600
Finance 252-636-6603
Human Resources 252-636-6602

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Media Contact: Amber Tabarrini
(252) 631-8002

Positive Rabies Case Identified in Craven County

Craven County, N.C. – On August 27, 2024, the Craven County Health Department was notified of a raccoon that tested positive for rabies. The animal was found on St. John's Road in the western part of Craven County. Any person bitten or exposed to potentially infectious saliva from this animal should contact their healthcare provider or the local health department for a rabies risk assessment. You may contact the Craven County Health Department at 252-636-4920.

Rabies is a fatal yet preventable disease if post exposure prophylaxis (PEP) is administered. Rabies is transmitted by the bite of an infected animal or via contamination of open wounds or mucous membranes with potentially infectious material such as saliva. A common mistake pet owners make is using bare hands to check their pet for bites after an altercation with a potentially rabid animal, such as a raccoon or fox. If your pet is bitten, leave the wound alone and take your pet to a veterinarian.

Prevention of rabies is based on protection of susceptible animals and people and appropriate management of persons and animals exposed to rabies:

1. Vaccinate pets. In accordance with NC State Law, all dogs, cats, and ferrets must be kept currently vaccinated against rabies and must wear a rabies tag. Cats are the most identified domestic animal with rabies.
2. Control measures for pets exposed to rabies: If pets are exposed to rabies, they should receive a booster dose of rabies vaccine if they are currently vaccinated at the time of exposure. If pets are not currently vaccinated against rabies when exposed, the animals will be euthanized or quarantined in accordance with state law.
3. Control measures for persons exposed to rabies: Seek medical guidance from your healthcare provider or the local health department if you believe you have been exposed to rabies.
4. Limit stray and feral animals. In the incorporated areas of New Bern, Havelock, Riverbend, Bridgeton and Vanceboro all dogs must be kept on a leash. People should not approach stray or feral dogs or cats. Feral cat colonies should be intensively monitored, and their location reported to Craven County Animal Protective Services.
5. Leave wildlife alone. Raccoons and other wildlife serve as the reservoir for rabies in North Carolina.

Craven-Pamlico Animal Services Center provides low-cost rabies vaccinations during normal business hours Tuesday through Saturday. The cost is \$10.00 and open to the public. Call Craven-Pamlico Animal Services center at 252-637-4606 for more information.

Rabies occurs throughout North Carolina. Anyone that sees an animal demonstrating unusual behavior should call Craven County Animal Protective Services at 252-639-4256.

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