



Coastal Health District

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NEWS RELEASE

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Bat Tests Positive for Rabies on Skidaway Island

CHATHAM COUNTY, GA – A bat that was discovered outside a home on Skidaway Island in Chatham County has tested positive for rabies. There was no known human exposure to the sick bat, but the animal had contact with a family dog on the property. Fortunately, the dog was up to date on its rabies vaccination and received a booster shot.

The Chatham County Health Department’s Environmental Health office reminds all residents to avoid contact with wild animals and ensure pets are properly vaccinated.

Several species of wild animals that are native to coastal Georgia – including raccoons, foxes, and bats – can carry rabies. Rabies is a potentially deadly virus that is primarily spread by infected animals. Following these tips can protect you and your family from rabies:

- Avoid contact with animals you don’t know.
- Make sure your pets receive the proper immunizations. Dogs and cats should get rabies vaccines after 12 weeks of age, followed by a booster shot within one year and vaccination every 1-3 years depending on veterinary recommendation and vaccine used.
- **Do not** handle, feed, or unintentionally attract wild animals with open garbage cans or by leaving pet food out at night.
- **Never** adopt wild animals or bring them into your home. Do not try to nurse sick animals to health. Call animal control or a properly licensed animal rescue agency for assistance.
- Teach children to **never** handle unfamiliar animals, wild or domestic, even if they appear friendly. “Love your own, leave other animals alone” is a good principle for children to learn.

Symptoms of rabies in animals include a change in behavior, biting, aggression, showing no fear of natural enemies (such as humans), foaming at the mouth, and paralysis.

If an animal ever bites you, seek medical care immediately and contact Chatham County Animal Services at 912-652-6575 and the Chatham County Environmental Health office at 912-356-2160.

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We Protect Lives.