



News Release

Date: April 30, 2009
To: All Media
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Re: 11th Rabies Case Confirmed for 2009

(New Hanover County)— Another case of rabies has increased the number of cases to 11 in New Hanover County so far this year. Animal Control Officers responded to a call of a sick raccoon on Bayfield Drive (Marsh Oaks) on Wednesday. Since the sick animal was seen in the vicinity of a pet cat, the decision was made to proceed with lab testing of the raccoon.

Results returned from the state lab today showing the raccoon was a carrier and the cat's owner was notified. The owner had the pet cat revaccinated.

When dealing with primary rabies vectors (raccoons, foxes, skunks, and bats), it is recommended that the animal be handled with protective gloves to prevent viral transmission. Personal pets should not be handled without protection, due the potential for carrying residual saliva from the infected animal. Feeding wildlife is ill advised.

Animals that have a current rabies vaccination at the time of exposure should be re-boosted within 72 hours of exposure. There are three primary routes of transmission of the rabies virus, which is carried in the saliva of the infected animal: 1) the primary route of transmission is through a bite which breaks the skin of the victim, 2) salivary contact to an open, fresh wound, or, 3) saliva contact to the mucous membranes of a potential victim.

11 cases of rabies have been confirmed so far this year in New Hanover County. A total of 105 cases of the disease have been reported since rabies returned to the area in the early 1990s.

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