



News Release

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Re: Rabies Case Confirmed

(New Hanover County)— New Hanover County Animal Control Services has confirmed the third case of rabies for 2008. On Saturday, Animal Control Services (ACS) was contacted after a citizen on Myrtle Grove Road reported shooting a raccoon that had gotten into a fight with his neighbor's cat. The neighbor saw a single cat fighting the raccoon; however, two other cats at the residence were similar in markings and color. The neighbor could not positively identify the single cat, so all three were quarantined pending the outcome of the rabies test.

Today, the State Lab notified ACS that the raccoon had tested positive for rabies. The pet owner was notified. Only one cat was current for rabies vaccination. The neighbor was unable to determine which cat fought the raccoon. The owner opted to re-boost the one cat which was current on its rabies vaccination and destroy their other two cats.

Pets that have a current rabies vaccination at the time of exposure should be re-boosted within 72 hours of exposure. Recommendation is to destroy exposed animals that are not current with their rabies vaccination. 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.

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 directly after being exposed to wildlife, due the potential for carrying residual saliva from the infected animal. Humans should stay away from any animal that has not been cleared, including owned dogs or cats, and especially wildlife. Feeding wildlife is ill advised.

This is our 94th positive case since rabies returned to New Hanover County in the 1990s.

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