

Mission:

To protect, promote & improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county & community efforts.



Ron DeSantis
Governor

Scott A. Rivkees, MD
State Surgeon General

Vision: To be the **Healthiest State** in the Nation

For Immediate Release

Date: September 10, 2020

Contact Person: Michelle Fedrick
Public Information Officer

Phone: (850) 518-9389

Email: Michelle.Fedrick@flhealth.gov

Rabies Alert

Quincy, Fla: Adrian Cooksey, DrPH, MPH, Director, Florida Department of Health Gadsden County, has issued a rabies alert for the western geographical region of Gadsden County. This is in response to a fox that tested positive for rabies, following a bite incident that was reported on September 9, 2020.

All residents of Gadsden County should be aware that rabies is present in the wild animal population and domestic animals are at risk if not vaccinated. The public is asked to maintain a heightened awareness that rabies is active in Gadsden County. Alerts are designed to increase awareness to the public, but they should not give a false sense of security to areas that have not been named under an alert.

The rabies alert will remain active for 60 days. The center of the rabies alert includes the following area boundaries in Gadsden County:

- North and South of CR270 / Sycamore Road between Old Church Road and West Street

An animal with rabies could infect other wild animals or domestic animals that have not been vaccinated against rabies. All domestic animals should be vaccinated against rabies and all wildlife contact should be avoided, particularly raccoons, bats, foxes, skunks, otters, bobcats and coyotes. Rabies is a disease of the nervous system and is fatal to warm blooded animals and humans. The only treatment for human exposure to rabies is rabies specific immune globulin and rabies immunization. Appropriate treatment, started soon after the exposure, will protect an exposed person from the disease. The following advice is issued:

- Keep rabies vaccinations up to date for all pets.
- If your pet is bitten by a wild animal, seek veterinary assistance for the animal immediately and contact Gadsden County Animal Control Services at (850) 875-8658.
- Call Gadsden County Animal Control Services to remove any stray animals from your neighborhood.
- **Do not** handle, feed, or unintentionally attract wild animals by leaving pet food outside or garbage cans open.
- **Never** adopt wild animals or bring them into your home.
- Teach children **never** to handle unfamiliar animals, wild or domestic, even if they appear friendly.
- Prevent bats from entering living quarters or occupied spaces in homes, churches, schools, and other similar areas where they might come in contact with people and pets.
- Persons who have been bitten or scratched by wild or domestic animals should seek medical attention and report the injury to the Florida Department of Health Gadsden County at (850) 875-7200, option 6.

For further information on rabies, go to the Florida Department of Health website: <http://www.floridahealth.gov/diseases-and-conditions/rabies/index.html>, contact Florida Department of Health Gadsden County (850) 875-7200 option 6, or Gadsden County Animal Control (850) 875-8658.

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