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## NASSAU COUNTY HEALTH OFFICIALS ISSUE RABIES ALERT



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**Nassau County** – The Nassau County Health Department (CHD) issued a rabies alert for central Nassau County. This is in response to a fox that tested positive for rabies.

All residents and visitors in Nassau 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 Nassau County. Alerts are designed to increase awareness to the public. Please be aware that rabies activities can also occur outside the alert area.

This rabies alert is for 60 days. The rabies alert includes the following boundaries in Nassau County:

- St. Mary's River to the North,
- Barnwell Road to the East,
- US Hwy 17 the West,
- State Road 200 South.

An animal with rabies may appear sick or lethargic, have problems swallowing, or drool or salivate excessively. A wild animal may appear tamer than usual and some animals may have no visible symptoms. An animal with rabies could infect 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. If you have been bitten or scratched by a wild or domestic animal, seek medical attention, and report the injury to your county health department. If your pet is bitten by a wild animal, seek immediate veterinary assistance for the animal and contact your local animal control agency.

Residents and visitors are advised to take the following precautions:

- Keep rabies vaccinations up to date for all pets.
- Keep your pets under direct supervision so they do not come in contact with wild animals. If your pet is bitten by a wild animal, seek veterinary assistance for the animal

immediately and contact Nassau County Animal Services at 904-530-6150, or the Nassau Humane Society at 904-491-0122 for incidents in the city of Fernandina Beach.

- Spay or neuter your pets to help reduce the number of unwanted pets that may not be properly cared for or regularly vaccinated.
- Outdoor feeding can attract animals such as feral cats, raccoons, and coyotes. Do not handle, feed, or unintentionally attract wild animals with open garbage cans or litter.
- 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.

For further information on rabies, go to <http://www.floridahealth.gov/diseases-and-conditions/rabies/index.html>, or contact Nassau CHD at 904-875-6100.

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