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## BAKER COUNTY HEALTH OFFICIALS ISSUE RABIES ALERT



**Contact:**

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**Baker County** – The Baker County Health Department (CHD) issued a rabies alert for Baker County. This is in response to a cat that tested positive for rabies in the area of County Road 23C and 23D North of Macclenny.

All residents and visitors in Baker 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 Baker 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 Baker County:

- Bob Burnsed Road to the West.
- St. Mary's River to the North
- State Road 121 to the East
- Tim Rhoden Road to the South

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.

Residents and visitors are advised to take the following precautions:

- Call your local animal control agency to remove any stray animals from your neighborhood.
- 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 Baker County Animal Control at 904-259-6786.
- 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 Baker CHD at 904-653-5273.

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