

June 15, 2025

DOH-Polk Issues Rabies Alert



Contact:

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Polk County, Fla.—The Florida Department of Health in Polk County (DOH-Polk) is issuing a rabies alert in Polk County in response to a confirmed case of rabies in a unvaccinated feral cat that was found in the north Lakeland area off Glen Road in Polk County on June 11, 2026. DOH-Polk is monitoring rabies among wild animals in the area. All residents and visitors should be aware that rabies is currently present in the wild animal population.

People and domestic animals should always avoid physical contact with wild animals (e.g., raccoons, bats, foxes, skunks, otters, bobcats, coyotes), which carry a higher risk of human exposure and a need for rabies post-exposure treatment. If you are exposed to rabies, receiving appropriate treatment after exposure will protect you from the risk of rabies.

This rabies alert is for 60 days and includes the following boundaries in Polk County:

- **Northern boundary: Chart Prine Road**
- **Southern boundary: West Bella Vista St.**
- **Eastern boundary: Gardner Road**
- **Western boundary: Shady Oak Drive East**

Take the following precautions to prevent rabies exposure:

- Immunize your pets and livestock based on your veterinarian's recommended schedule.
- Keep pets under direct supervision and on a leash, and keep livestock secured on your property. If an animal bites your pet or livestock, seek veterinary assistance for the animal immediately and contact Polk County Sheriff's Office Animal Control at 863-577-1762.
- Avoid contact with wild or stray animals. Do not handle, feed, or unintentionally attract them with outdoor pet food, open garbage cans, or other sources of food. If you have been bitten or scratched by a wild or domestic animal, seek medical attention, and report the injury to DOH-Polk by calling 863-519-8300, option 4.
- Never adopt wild animals or bring them into your home; instead, contact a [licensed wildlife rehabilitator](#).
- Call your local animal control agency to remove any stray animals from your neighborhood. Contact Polk County Sheriff's Office Animal Control at 863-577-1762.
- Prevent wildlife, including [bats](#), from entering living quarters or occupied spaces in homes, schools, and other similar areas where they might come in contact with people and pets.

For more information on rabies, please visit [FloridaHealth.gov/Rabies](https://www.floridahealth.gov/Rabies) or contact DOH-Polk at 863-519-8300, option 4.

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