



For immediate release:

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Health Officials Remind Residents to Take Measures to Prevent Rabies

Following identification of rabies virus in two gray foxes from the Blairsden area this week, Plumas County Public Health is reminding residents that rabies can be found in local wildlife. "Rabies is a serious and nearly always fatal disease," says Plumas County Health Officer, Dr. Mark Satterfield, "but is 100% preventable. People should avoid contact with wild animals and seek immediate medical care if they are bitten by a wild animal."

Rabies is a severe infection of the nervous system caused by a virus that is most often transmitted through the bite from a rabid animal. Rabies is nearly always fatal once someone develops clinical signs, but it can be prevented with prompt medical attention and prophylaxis following a possible exposure.

Rabies is found in wild animals throughout California each year. In 2020, the California Department of Public Health reported rabies in 248 animals statewide, mostly bats and skunks. Other wild animals, such as foxes, as well as household dogs and cats can also occasionally get rabies. Since 2000, only four cases of rabies, all bats, were reported in Plumas County, the most recent in 2016. The last detection of rabies in foxes in Plumas County was in 1970. Nevertheless, residents should remember that there is always a risk of contracting rabies from both wild and domestic animals.

Plumas County Public Health officials are advising residents to take the following measures to protect themselves, their pets, and livestock from rabies.

- Avoid contact with wild animals like foxes. Rabid animals may appear aggressive or docile or injured. Do not approach any wild animal or attempt to feed or capture it.
- Discourage wildlife from being attracted to your home by collecting uneaten pet food and keeping garbage bins covered and secure.
- Consult with your veterinarian to ensure that dogs and cats are up-to-date on rabies vaccinations and consider vaccinating horses and other livestock.
- If you observe wild or stray animals that are behaving unusually or if you are bitten contact Plumas County Animal Control at 530-283-3673. It is important to report cases for monitoring purposes. Animal Control may contact Fish and Wildlife to assist with the capture of certain wildlife.
- Seek immediate medical care if you are bitten by or have direct contact with an animal that draws blood. Your health care provider will provide wound care and determine whether rabies post-exposure prophylaxis is needed.

For more information regarding rabies go to county website at: <https://www.plumascounty.us/2400/Vector-Rabies-Control-Program> or call 530-283-6355.