



News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Jan. 20, 2016

Animal Control

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Rabies Confirmed in Cumberland County Cat

FAYETTEVILLE – This morning the State Public Health Lab in Raleigh reported a positive result for rabies in a Cumberland County cat found within the 2400 block of Robeson St. The stray cat had been taken to Highland Animal Hospital on Monday, Jan. 18, after it bit a woman who was attempting to put it in a cat carrier.

The animal hospital euthanized the cat, which appeared sick and did not have a microchip or anything to identify an owner, and contacted Animal Control to send it for testing on Tuesday, Jan. 19. The woman has been notified of the positive rabies result and advised to seek medical treatment.

This is the first rabies case in the county for 2016.

All pet owners are urged to check the vaccination status of their pets. If pets are not vaccinated or are due for a booster shot, they should be taken to a local veterinarian for rabies vaccination immediately.

The first sign of rabies in animals is a change in behavior. Animals may become aggressive, attacking for no reason, or they may become very quiet. Wild animals can lose their fear of people and act tame. Rabid animals may walk in a circle, drag a leg, or fall over. Some cannot swallow so they are not able to eat or drink and often drool. Animals usually die within a week after first becoming ill.

Avoiding wild animals and keeping your distance from stray dogs and cats is the first step in preventing an animal bite. Any pet, which appears to have been in a fight while outside, should be handled very cautiously and seen by a veterinarian.

If you are bitten or scratched by an animal:

- Immediately wash the wound under running water for at least 10 minutes with lots of soap. Seek medical attention/advice.
- Call Animal Control at 321-6852 Monday-Friday 8 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Call the Sheriff's Office at 323-1500 after 5 p.m., weekends and holidays.
- Go to the emergency room.

It is also important to vaccinate your pets for rabies and keep their shots current. Pet owners are reminded that all dogs and cats must be vaccinated against rabies, as required by state law. Pet owners are subject to a fine of \$100 for each unvaccinated dog or cat. Pets must be vaccinated when they reach the age of four months.

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