



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Five rabid animals identified in southwest New Mexico

SANTA FE – The New Mexico Department of Health (NMDOH) has confirmed rabies in five wild animals recovered in southwest New Mexico. All five of the rabid animals were reported at or near a residence and acted aggressively towards people.

They include a fox and a bobcat both in reserve preservation land areas, a bobcat near Mimbres in Grant County, a fox from the Kingston area in Sierra County, and a fox near Datil in Catron County.

“Rabies is a deadly viral disease that can be prevented, but not cured. The virus lives in the saliva of rabid animals and is spread to people or other animals through a bite,” said Tim Hanosh, State Public Health Veterinarian. “Any person or animal who comes in contact with saliva from a rabid animal can be at risk of getting rabies too and should seek medical treatment immediately.”

Avoiding contact with wild animals is the surest way of protecting family members, pets, and livestock from being exposed to the disease. In addition, all dogs, cats, and horses should be vaccinated against rabies. Livestock owners are advised to follow guidance provided by their veterinarian regarding vaccinating their animals.

Keeping pets under observation when outdoors, avoiding leaving any pet food or scraps outside, keeping your outdoor garbage cans tightly sealed, and alerting the authorities listed below if you see any abnormally acting wildlife are essential to helping prevent rabies from spreading.

“Our conservation officers have been trained to safely capture and restrain wild animals,” reminds Tim Cimbal, Colonel of Game and Fish Field Operations. “They have appropriate equipment and supplies to handle wild mammals.”

Any physical contact with wild mammals should be immediately reported to the NMDOH and the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish.

Wildlife acting oddly, especially foxes, bobcats, coyotes, skunks, raccoons, and bats can be reported to the Department of Game and Fish by calling (505) 476-8000 or after business hours call the New Mexico State Police non-emergency phone number (505) 841-9256. The public should immediately call the New Mexico Department of Health at (505) 827-0006 anytime, day or night, including weekends and holidays, if they or their pets are bitten or otherwise exposed to the saliva of wild animals.

The NMDOH Zoonotic Team works with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to track and prevent rabies cases in New Mexico and beyond. Information learned from tracking cases is used to monitor the spread of different variants of the virus and provide information regarding the risk of rabies infection during the decision making process post bite.

NMDOH provides rabies education and collaborates with the medical and veterinary communities, the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish, and animal control agencies throughout the state regarding appropriate rabies response. Also included are New Mexico State University County Extension, the New Mexico Livestock Board, and the New Mexico Department of Agriculture for help in getting word out to residents regarding diseases such as rabies.

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