



EL PASO COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT

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NEWS

For Immediate Release

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Second Fox Tests Positive for Rabies in El Paso County

El Paso County, CO—A second fox in the Woodmoor neighborhood in northern El Paso County tested positive for rabies Friday, June 11, according to the El Paso County Department of Health and Environment. This is the second rabid fox in El Paso County to be reported in 2010. Through June 8, 57 animals in Colorado have tested positive for rabies. Statewide totals do not yet include the second fox in El Paso County.

In the most recent case, the Division of Wildlife (DOW) responded to a call regarding a fox charging two dogs and then not running away when approached by a person. The fox had died when the DOW officers arrived.

“The good news in this case was that no people came into contact with this rabid fox, and both pets that were potentially exposed to the fox were protected with up-to-date rabies vaccination,” said Kandi Buckland, R.N., M.P.A., executive director of the El Paso County Department of Health and Environment.

It is critical that pets be vaccinated against rabies. “Un-or-undervaccinated dogs and cats that are exposed to rabies have an extremely high chance of getting infected and dying from the disease. These pets also pose a tremendous risk to humans because they can bring rabies into the home,” Buckland said.

Rabies is spread primarily through the bite of rabid mammals and is almost always fatal. “This fox is likely to have been infected by a rabid skunk, so we continue to see rabies infection spillover into different mammal species in our county. We urge you to keep your pets up to date with rabies vaccinations and to take all the necessary rabies prevention measures to protect your family,” Buckland said.

“Leaving pet food outside will attract wildlife. We ask that you keep pet food away and make it inaccessible to wildlife, Buckland added.

In 2010 so far, El Paso County has identified rabies in three skunks and two foxes. In 2009, rabies was detected in eight skunks, a fox, horse and mountain lion. Prior to 2009, El Paso County last reported a rabid skunk in 1974.

Here are some key rabies prevention steps:

- Ensure that dogs, cats and ferrets are vaccinated properly against rabies by a licensed veterinarian. Also, discuss vaccinating horses and other livestock with your veterinarian.
- Don't feed wild animals or allow your pets around them. Teach children to stay away from wild mammals. Do not keep pet food outside as that may attract wild animals.
- Protect all pets, particularly animals too young to be vaccinated, from contact with wild animals. Puppies and kittens can be vaccinated for rabies as early as 3 months old, depending on the vaccine used.
- Contact your veterinarian if your dog or cat is bitten or scratched by wild animals, such as skunks, bats, foxes, coyotes or raccoons.
- If you or a family member has been bitten by a wild animal or a domestic animal unknown to you, contact your physician and the Humane Society of the Pikes Peak Region without delay.
- If you see a skunk or other wild mammal that is acting abnormally, such as stumbling or acting overly aggressive, make sure you keep children and pets away from the animal and call the Division of Wildlife to report the location.
- To remove a dead skunk or other wildlife on your property, do not touch the animal. Remove the carcass with a shovel or other tool, and double bag it for the trash.
- Take steps to bat proof your home.

The Colorado Department of Public Health and Environments updates their Web site every Friday with rabies data at www.cdphe.state.co.us/dc/zoonosis/rabies/

Go to www.elpasocountyhealth.org for more information about rabies.

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