



News

Release



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For Immediate Release

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Rabid Skunk Found in Wichita Falls

Wichita Falls, Texas- On January 22, 2025, an Animal Care Officer responded to a call at the Lake Wichita dog park, located at 5205 Fairway Drive in Wichita Falls. A skunk was killed by a dog during daylight. The skunk was collected by Animal Services and sent for testing. The Health District received a positive rabies result today, marking the first positive case in 2025. The dog is in isolation, at home as allowed by state law.

While most wild animals are not infected with rabies, residents should always remember that wild animals, by nature, are unpredictable and can carry diseases. Any exposure to wild animals, alive or dead—especially bats, raccoons, skunks, coyotes, and foxes (the top five carriers of the virus in Texas)—should be avoided. Children and pets should be closely monitored while outdoors to ensure they do not come into contact with or touch wild animals. If a wild animal enters your property, bring children and pets indoors, alert others in the vicinity, and allow the animal to wander away.

Animal Services urges anyone who observes a wild or domestic animal displaying signs of illness, fearlessness, aggression, or other unusual behaviors (such as nocturnal animals out during the day) to contact Animal Services immediately at 940-761-7824. Do not attempt to capture or shoot the animal; it cannot be tested if shot in the head. Be aware that rabies can only be transmitted through saliva. Exposure may occur if a person is scratched by an infected animal or if saliva enters an open wound or mucous membrane (nose, mouth, eyes).

Rabies is 100% preventable by following a few important guidelines:

- Ensure all pets—dogs, cats, and ferrets—are current on their rabies vaccinations, as required by Texas state law. Livestock owners are also encouraged to vaccinate horses and other livestock.
- Do not allow pets to roam freely.
- Stay away from all wild animals and unknown dogs and cats.
- Avoid wild animals—even if they appear friendly.
- Never coax a wild animal to eat from your hand.
- If you encounter a bat, do not handle it. Bats have extremely small teeth, and you may not realize that you have been bitten.

- Teach your children to report all bites, scratches, and encounters with wild or unknown animals.

To reduce the risk of exposure to rabies from wildlife, we recommend the following:

- Do not feed or water pets outside. Even empty bowls can attract wild and stray animals. If you are feeding feral cats, do so early in the day and do not leave food out overnight, as this will attract wild animals.
- Keep garbage securely covered. Open garbage attracts wild or stray animals.
- Wild animals should not be kept as pets.
- Enjoy all wild animals from a distance and teach children never to handle unfamiliar animals—even if they appear friendly.

Animal Services also advises pet owners not to purchase or take “free” animals—especially puppies and kittens—from individuals offering them for sale or giveaway on the side of the road or in parking lots. Domesticated animals may be quarantined for rabies observation, while wildlife will be euthanized and sent to the Department of State Health Services for rabies testing.

If someone has been bitten or scratched and broken the skin, contact a medical professional for immediate assistance. Also, contact the City of Wichita Falls Animal Services Center at 940-761-7824 to make a report or regarding concerns of potential rabies exposure.

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