

NEWS RELEASE

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For immediate release

For more info, contact: **Becky Corman**, RN 308-262-2217 or 855-227-2217

As people take to the outdoors to enjoy the summer weather, Panhandle Public Health District urges caution when encountering unknown domestic or wild animals. As of July 15, 25 positive cases of animal rabies have been identified in Nebraska of which 7 have occurred in skunks originating in the Panhandle. Statewide, cases have also been confirmed in bats, cattle, cats, and a llama, horse, and dog. In Nebraska, skunks and bats are the main sources of rabies and the most common animal species testing positive for the disease.

The risk of exposure to rabies is real, but the disease is preventable in both humans and domestic animals. Domestic pets and livestock can be infected from exposure to wildlife.

PPHD Surveillance Coordinator Becky Corman reinforces the importance of rabies vaccinations. “Have your veterinarian vaccinate your dogs, cats, ferrets, horses, and valuable livestock against rabies. Booster vaccinations as directed are also important to make sure they remain protected.”

Other tips to prevent rabies include:

- If bitten by an animal, seek medical attention and report the bite to your local public health department or animal control authorities immediately.
- If your animal is bitten, contact your veterinarian for an appointment for the animal to be examined.
- Do not handle, or feed wild animals. Never adopt wild animals or bring them into your home.
- If wild animals appear sick or injured, call animal control authorities or an animal rescue agency for assistance.
- Teach children never to handle unfamiliar animals, wild or domestic, even if they appear friendly.

For additional information visit www.pphd.org or call PPHD at 308-487-3600 or toll free at 866-701-7173. Panhandle Public Health District is working together to improve the health, safety and quality of life for all who live, learn, work and play in the Panhandle. Our vision is that we are a healthier and safer Panhandle Community.