

NEWS RELEASE

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Bat found in downtown area tests positive for rabies

Abilene, Texas – The City of Abilene would like to advise residents and those who frequent the downtown area that a bat found on September 2, 2020 in the 1100 block of North 2nd Street between Cedar and Cypress Streets has tested positive for rabies. Abilene Animal Services received notification of the bat's positive rabies result September 4, 2020. There are no known human or domestic pet infections at this time.

Rabies is a deadly virus that affects the central nervous system. The virus is spread through the saliva of infected animals, most commonly after being bitten by a rabid animal. Rabies infection can only be treated through a series of shots administered by a healthcare professional, and anyone potentially infected with rabies must seek immediate care as the virus may be untreatable once rabies symptoms are present.

Signs of rabies in animals include abnormal behavior such as nocturnal animals being active during the day, approaching humans or other animals, difficulty with movement, and unusual sounds. A wild animal that allows you to approach or handle it is likely ill or injured and will bite in self-defense.

Unusual animal activity and suspected rabid animals should be reported immediately to Abilene Animal Services at 698-0085.

Abilene Animal Services offers these tips concerning exposure to rabies:

- Do not feed, handle, or touch wild animals such as bats, skunks, and raccoons.
- Teach children to stay away from wild or deceased animals.
- Do not allow pets to roam freely, as free-roaming increases their chance of exposure without your knowledge.
- Keep your pet's rabies vaccination current.
- Immediately contact a veterinarian if your pet is bitten or scratched by a wild animal.
- Consult with a physician immediately after possible rabies exposure.
- Report all animal bites to animal control authorities; the biting animal must be quarantined or tested for rabies.

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