

NEWS

Date: August 29, 2017

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Ada County Bat Tests Positive for Rabies

Ada County — A bat found in Ada County tested positive for rabies, making it the first rabid bat discovery in the county this season. The bat was brought inside of an Eagle area home by a family cat. While the cat had contact with the bat, the homeowner did not have any exposure to the infected bat.

In Idaho, bats are the natural reservoir for rabies. Bites are considered the primary way rabies is transmitted, but waking up in a room with a bat, without having a clear idea of the bat's behavior during the night can also put people and pets at risk for rabies infection.

Without timely medical treatment, rabies infection is virtually 100 percent fatal in people and animals. In Idaho, rabid bats are typically reported between March and November. Last year, 20 bats tested positive for rabies in our state; 11 of those were found within Ada County.

"We have seen a recent uptick in calls and concerns from the public related to exposure to bats," said Sarah Correll, Epidemiologist with Central District Health Department (CDHD). "It's important that parents talk to their kids about not touching wild animals. Also, people should have their pets vaccinated to protect them in case they interact with a rabid bat or other wild animal," said Correll.

Because rabies is a life threatening disease, medical advice must be sought promptly if a bat comes into contact with humans or animals. Medical therapy given to people soon after a possible rabies exposure is extremely effective in preventing rabies.

To protect yourself and your pets, CDHD offers the following tips:

- Do not touch a bat with your bare hands;
- If you have had an encounter with a bat, seek medical attention;
- If you come in contact with a bat, save the bat in a container without touching it and contact your district health department to arrange testing for rabies. Whenever possible, the bat should be tested to rule out an exposure to rabies;
- Always vaccinate your pets for rabies, including horses. Pets may encounter bats outdoors or in the home; and
- Bat-proof your home or cabin by plugging all holes in the siding and maintaining tight-fitting screens on windows.

For more information on bats and rabies, visit www.cdc.gov/rabies. To track the number of rabid bats in Idaho, visit:

<http://www.healthandwelfare.idaho.gov/Health/DiseasesConditions/RabiesInformation/tabid/176/Default.aspx>