



Jefferson County
PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE

Public Health Facility, 531 Meade Street, Watertown, New York 13601

PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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Two More Skunks Test Positive for Rabies

Watertown, NY January 5, 2016~ The New York State Department of Health laboratory has reported to the Jefferson County Public Health Service that two skunks, one near Burrville and the other near Rutland, have tested positive for rabies. A total of five rabid skunks have tested positive for rabies since December 4th with the previous 3 being in the City of Watertown.

Both of the skunks who tested positive this week were killed when pets were exposed. Unfortunately, one pet was not vaccinated and is being euthanized. The other pet was current with rabies vaccination and is requiring a booster. Skunks typically stay in dens during cold weather but the warmer temperatures we have experienced have made the skunks more active than usual.

Rabies is a fatal disease that attacks the brain and spinal cord. It can take several weeks to several months for rabies symptoms to appear. Early treatment after an exposure can prevent rabies.

Any mammal can get rabies, but it is most often seen in bats, raccoons, skunks, and foxes. Animals with rabies may be aggressive, sick or unusually friendly. Please take these steps to help prevent the spread of rabies:

1. Teach children to stay away from unfamiliar animals, either wild or domestic, even if they appear friendly. Remind them to tell you if they have any unusual contact with an animal.
2. Do not leave pet food outside as it attracts wildlife to your home.
3. Wash any wound from an animal encounter thoroughly with soap and water and seek medical attention immediately.
4. Be a responsible pet owner by keeping your pet's vaccinations current. Getting your pet vaccinated by your vet or at a clinic can help stop the spread of rabies from wild animals to humans.
5. Monitor your pet when they are outside. If your pet is involved in an altercation with a wild animal, do not get in between them. Do not touch your pet without gloves as rabies is spread through saliva. Cover your pet with a towel and contact your vet as your pet may need a booster shot.

For further information about rabies, please go to www.icphs.org and click on [Rabies Control](#).

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