



**BERGEN COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SERVICES**  
**327 E. RIDGEWOOD AVENUE, PARAMUS, NJ 07652**  
**(201) 634-2600**  
**www.bergenhealth.org**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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Contact: 201-634-2600

## **RESIDENTS WARNED TO AVOID ALL WILD ANIMALS**

(HACKENSACK) – The Bergen County Department of Health Services today urged all county residents to stay away from wild animals. Since January 2011, 15 animals from the county have tested positive for rabies; one was a skunk and all others were raccoons. Of these, 4 have been captured in Edgewater, from all areas of the town including heavily populated areas such those near the ferries. In additional cases, animal control officers have not been able to capture the suspected animals.

Avoid all animals exhibiting either unprovoked aggression or unnatural tameness. Rabies is fatal if left untreated and can be transmitted to humans through biting, scratching, or direct contact with saliva from a rabid animal. Take the following precautions to prevent the spread of rabies:

- Do not feed, handle or approach wild or stray animals
- Avoid animals that act in a strange or unusual way
- Report stray animals to the local police department. Animal control officers are trained to handle stray dogs and cats. Never attempt to handle wild or stray animals yourself
- Protect pets from encounters with wild or stray animals. Inoculate pets and do not allow them to roam free.

Individuals who are bitten by a wild animal must begin rabies treatment, regardless of whether the animal tested positive for the disease. Treatment includes four injections of the rabies vaccine in the upper arm over a 28-day period.

Call your local police department if you see a wild animal that is acting sick or showing abnormal behaviors, such as partial paralysis, staggering as if drunk or disoriented, circling or self-mutilating. Adults must be able to report the location and description of the animal. If the animal is a pet, officials need the owner's name, address, and telephone number, the animal's vaccination status, and its licensing number/identification.

Wild animals such as raccoons, skunks, bats and groundhogs are commonly affected. Feral cats are also among animals most often infected. Over 6,000 animals have been identified as rabid in New Jersey since 1989.

If you have any questions about rabies or a possible rabies exposure, contact your municipal health department. A listing of all municipalities in Bergen County can be found at [www.bergenhealth.org/dept/resources/munidirectory.html](http://www.bergenhealth.org/dept/resources/munidirectory.html).

For further information, contact the Bergen County Department of Health at 201-634-2600 or log on to [www.bergenhealth.org](http://www.bergenhealth.org). Rabies is listed under "Health Topics." Edgewater residents can call 201-943-1700, x6004.

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