

Grey Fox Tests Positive for Rabies in Town of Richmondville

A grey fox found in the town of Richmondville has tested positive for Rabies. The fox was sent to Wadsworth Laboratory for testing and the positive test results were received by Schoharie County Department of Health on Monday, May 15, 2017. There were several domestic animals and two humans exposed. Schoharie County Department of Health is coordinating the rabies post-exposure prophylaxis treatment for the people exposed. The animals were up-to-date with their rabies vaccinations and have received rabies booster shots.

Once infected, rabies is a virus that has a 100% fatality rate in mammals (including humans) when left untreated. The following precautions will help protect your family and pets from rabies:

- **Vaccinate pets! New York State law requires that all dogs, cats and ferrets be vaccinated against rabies by 4 months of age.** Vaccinating your domestic animal not only provides protection for the animal, but vaccinated pets act as a barrier to keep the rabies virus from spreading between wild animals and people.
- Vaccination is also recommended for livestock with frequent human contact.
- Report any sick or strange acting wildlife.
- Do not feed wildlife or stray animals and discourage them from seeking food near your home.
- Do not feed strays. According to Public Health Law, an owner is defined as any person keeping, harboring, or having charge or control of or permitting any dog, cat or domesticated ferret to remain on or be lodged or fed within such person's house yard or premises.
- Do not approach an unknown animal, either wild or domestic, especially if it is acting in a strange or unusual manner.
- Report all animal bites and any contact with bats to the Health Department in your county. Human rabies can be prevented after exposure by administering a series of shots.
- Keep garbage cans tightly covered and avoid storing any food outside.
- Children should be instructed to tell an adult immediately if they were bitten or scratched by any animal.
- If an *unvaccinated* pet comes in contact with a wild or domestic animal that may have rabies, the pet must be quarantined for six months, at the expense of the owner.
- If a *vaccinated* pet comes in contact with a wild or domestic animal that may have rabies, the pet must be given a booster rabies vaccination within five days of the contact.

Schoharie County Public Health will provide free rabies vaccinations at the Gilboa Town Highway Garage on Thursday, 6/8/17 from 6 PM-8 PM. Additional clinics will be scheduled for the fall. For questions or to report a suspected rabid animal, call Schoharie County Public Health at 518-295-8365.