

February 3, 2017

## RABIES ALERT ISSUED FOR NORTHWEST MARION COUNTY

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**Ocala, Fla.**—The Florida Department of Health in Marion County has issued rabies alert No. 2017-001 for northwest Marion County. This is in response to a skunk that tested positive for rabies on Jan. 24.

All Marion County residents and visitors should be aware that rabies is present in the wild animal population and domestic animals are at risk if not vaccinated. The public is asked to maintain a heightened awareness that rabies is active in Marion County. Alerts are designed to increase public awareness, but alerts should not give residents a false sense of security if their neighborhood has not been named in the alert.

This rabies alert is for 60 days. The center of the rabies alert is in northwest Marion County and includes the following area boundaries in Marion County:

- Northwest 110th Street to the north
- Northwest 63rd Street to the south
- Northwest Highway 225A to the east
- Northwest 115th Avenue to the west

An animal with rabies could infect other wild animals or domestic animals that have not been vaccinated against rabies. All domestic animals should be vaccinated against rabies and all wildlife contact should be avoided, particularly raccoons, bats, foxes, skunks, otters, bobcats and coyotes. Residents should keep pets under direct supervision so they do not come in contact with wild animals. Rabies is a disease of the nervous system and is fatal to warm blooded animals and humans. The only treatment for human exposure to rabies is rabies-specific immune globulin and rabies immunization. Appropriate treatment started soon after the exposure will protect an exposed person from the disease.

Residents and visitors are advised to take the following precautions:

- Keep rabies vaccinations up to date for all pets.
- Keep pets under direct supervision so they do not come in contact with wild animals. If your pet is bitten by a wild animal, seek veterinary assistance for the animal immediately and contact Marion County Animal Services at 352-671-8727.
- Call your local animal control agency to report any stray animals in your neighborhood.
- Do not handle, feed, or unintentionally attract wild animals with open garbage cans or litter.
- Never adopt wild animals or bring them into your home.
- Teach children **never** to handle unfamiliar animals, wild or domestic, even if they appear friendly.
- Prevent bats from entering living quarters or occupied spaces in homes, churches, schools, and other similar areas, where they might come in contact with people and pets.
- Persons who have been bitten or scratched by wild or domestic animals should seek

medical attention and report the injury to the Florida Department of Health in Marion County at 352-629-0137.

For further information on rabies, go to [www.floridahealth.gov/diseases-and-conditions/rabies](http://www.floridahealth.gov/diseases-and-conditions/rabies) or call the Florida Department of Health in Marion County at 352-629-0137, or Marion County Animal Services at 352-671-8727.

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