

Mission:

To protect, promote & improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county & community efforts.

**Rick Scott**

Governor

John H. Armstrong, MD, FACS

State Surgeon General & Secretary

Vision: To be the **Healthiest State** in the Nation**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

July 27, 2015

Contact: Sarah Hinds, PIO

(850) 227-1276

Rabies Alert issued in Gulf County

Wewahitchka, Fla. – The Florida Department of Health in Gulf County issued a rabies alert for the Wewahitchka area in response to a raccoon that tested positive on July 25, 2015. The raccoon was found near Midway Park Drive along the Gulf and Calhoun county line. Please take extra caution while outdoors and be aware of your surroundings at all times.

All residents of Gulf County 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 Gulf County. Alerts are designed to increase awareness to the public, but they should not give a false sense of security to areas that have not been named as under an alert. The recent rabies alert is for 60 days.

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. 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.

The following advice is issued:

- Keep rabies vaccinations up to date for all pets.
- If your pet is bitten by a wild animal, seek veterinary assistance for the animal immediately and contact County Animal Services at 850-227-1115.
- Call your local animal control agency to remove any stray animals from your neighborhood.
- **Do not** handle, feed, or unintentionally attract wild animals by leaving pet food outside, or garbage cans open.
- **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 Gulf County at 850-227-1276.

The department works to protect, promote and improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county and community efforts. Follow us on Twitter at [@HealthyFla](#) and on [Facebook](#). For more information about the Florida Department of Health in Gulf County, please visit <http://gulf.floridahealth.gov/index.html>.

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Florida Department of Health

In GULF COUNTY

2475 Garrison Ave., Port St. Joe, FL 32456, Phone: 850-227-1276, Fax: 850-227-1794
807 Hwy 22, Wewahitchka, FL 32465, Phone: 850-639-2644, Fax: 850-639-2357**www.FloridasHealth.com**

TWITTER: HealthyFLA

FACEBOOK: FLDepartmentofHealth

YOUTUBE: fidoH