



MEDIA ADVISORY
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Contact: Tom Schlueter (630) 444-3098
(630) 417-9729 cell

Bat rabies case in Geneva brings county total to five

The Kane County Health Department has confirmed a case of bat rabies in Geneva. This brings the total so far to five cases in 2008 (three in Aurora, one in St. Charles and one in Geneva). The most recent case did not result in human exposure.

Paul Kuehnert, Executive Director of the Health Department, said that it is important to keep all pets—dogs, cats, ferrets, etc.—up-to-date with their rabies vaccinations. Not only does the vaccine protect the pet, it also serves as barrier of protection for people. Even indoor pets should be vaccinated, as illustrated by the fact that some of the bat cases are found indoors.

Last year, Kane reported five positive bats. Illinois recorded 113 confirmed cases of rabies in animals last year, all found in bats. This compares to 46 reported in 2006. In 2006 one bat with rabies was found in Kane County, the first since 2001. Bats are the primary carriers of rabies in Illinois. A case of human rabies has not been reported in Illinois since 1954.

Prevention guidelines:

- Rabid bats may exhibit no obvious abnormalities, so all contact with bats should be avoided.

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- Where there is a likelihood of encountering bats, such as at children's outdoor camps, people should be instructed not to touch bats.
- People should NOT be allowed to occupy a room in which bats are found, until it is certain that no bats remain in the room and that the room has been sealed to prevent their re-entry.
- If a bat is found indoors, the structure should be thoroughly inspected for the presence of roosting bats.
- Exclusion remains the best way to prevent and control bats in a structure.
- Keep pets under direct supervision so they do not come in contact with wild animals. If your pet is bitten by a wild animal or exposed to a bat, seek veterinary assistance for your pet immediately.
- Call the local animal control agency to remove contained stray animals in your neighborhood.

More information about rabies is available by calling the Health Department at (630) 208-3801 and asking for the Communicable Disease program. Exclusion remains the best way to prevent and control bats in a structure. Information about exclusion can be found by logging on to the Illinois Department of Public Health Web site at <http://www.idph.state.il.us/envhealth/pcbats.htm>. For information about a referral for capturing bats or for submitting specimens for testing, please call Kane County Animal Control at (630) 232-3555.

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