

News Releases

DHEC News Release: Aiken County residents advised to avoid wild animals, vaccinate pets

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 21, 2012

Aiken County residents advised to avoid wild animals, vaccinate pets

COLUMBIA, S.C. - An Aiken fox has tested positive for rabies, the S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Control reported today.

"Avoid wild animals acting tame and tame animals acting wild," said Sue Ferguson of DHEC's Bureau of Environmental Health. "About 275 South Carolinians are advised to undergo preventive treatment for rabies every year, with most exposures from being bitten or scratched by a rabid or suspected rabid animal. Wild animals carry the disease most often, but domestic pets can contract rabies as well."

Ferguson said state law requires pet owners to have their pets are regularly vaccinated against the disease.

"If you think you have been exposed to the rabies virus through a bite, scratch or the saliva of a possibly infected animal, immediately wash the affected area with plenty of soap and water," she said. "Then be sure to get medical attention and report the incident to DHEC."

While this is the second confirmed rabid animal of the year in Aiken County, nine rabid animals were confirmed there last year. There were 107 confirmed cases of animal rabies during 2011 in South Carolina. There have been 55 confirmed cases in animals statewide this year.

For more information about rabies, see DHEC's webpage at:

/Health/DiseasesandConditions/InfectiousDiseases/InsectAnimalBorne/Rabies/ <<http://www.scdhec.gov/rabies>> or contact your local **DHEC environmental health office** <<http://www.scdhec.gov/homeandenvironment/dheclocations/>>. The national Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's webpage about rabies can be found at: <http://www.cdc.gov/rabies> <<http://www.cdc.gov/rabies>>.

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For media inquiries:

Adam Myrick - (803) 898-3884

Email - myrickar@dhec.sc.gov

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S.C. Department of Health and
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