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# DHEC News Release: Residents of Hampton and Beaufort counties advised to avoid wild animals, vaccinate pets

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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 21, 2012

## Residents of Hampton and Beaufort counties advised to avoid wild animals, vaccinate pets

COLUMBIA, S.C. - The S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Control is warning residents of Hampton and Beaufort counties to avoid caring for wild animals after a baby raccoon tested positive for rabies.

"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 first confirmed rabid animal of the year in Hampton County, there were no rabid animals confirmed there last year. Beaufort County has had three animals confirmed as rabid this year, while five were confirmed rabid there last year. There were 107 confirmed cases of animal rabies during 2011 in South Carolina. There have been 53 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) <<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](mailto:myrickar@dhec.sc.gov)

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S.C. Department of Health and  
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