



McHenry County Department of Health

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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County's rabid bat count jumps to 8

Woodstock IL – Four more bats have tested positive for rabies this week, according to the McHenry County Department of Health (MCDH), doubling last week's count of 4. Bats were picked up in Woodstock and Cary (June 2) and McHenry and Crystal Lake on June 7. There was no human exposure; however a family cat was exposed with a veterinarian visit recommended. If bats are found, they should not be released but contained in a room, under a bucket or blanket. Bats must be in good condition in order to test it for rabies – either alive or recently deceased. Specimens that are in good condition and test negative for rabies eliminates the need for rabies treatment. Call McHenry County Animal Control immediately at 815-459-6222.

Rabies is a deadly disease caused by a virus that attacks the central nervous system and can only be confirmed in a laboratory. The most recent figure from the State Health Department's website shows 32 rabid bats reported state-wide. Lake, Kane, Cook and Will County are among those reporting rabid bats in 2010 in addition to central and southern counties. The best way to avoid rabies is to avoid exposure. Families are encouraged to take a "hands off" approach to wild animals to reduce their risk of exposure.

Keeping pets up to date with vaccinations provides protection for the owner as well. Most bats leave in the fall or winter to hibernate so these are the best times to "bat-proof" your home. A bat that is active by day, found in a place where bats are not usually seen (such as in your home, in a swimming pool or on the lawn) or is unable to fly, is more likely than not to be rabid. To learn more about rabies prevention, visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) at <http://www.cdc.gov/rabies/>.

Questions about exposure should be directed to MCDH's Communicable Disease Program at 815-334-4500.

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"Working to prevent disease and promote health and safety for all people of McHenry County since 1966."