



McHenry County Department of Health

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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County reports 4th rabid bat

Woodstock IL – McHenry County Department of Health (MCDH) confirms its 4th rabid bat reported on June 28 in Crystal Lake. There was no human exposure. It is strongly recommended that residents not release a bat but contain it in a room, under a bucket or blanket and keep people away from it. To test bats for rabies, they must be in good condition – either alive or recently deceased. Specimens that are in good condition and test negative for rabies eliminates the need for rabies treatment. Please contact McHenry County Animal Control immediately at 815-459-6222.

The State Health Department has reported 32 rabid bats 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. Rabies is a deadly disease caused by a virus that attacks the central nervous system and can only be confirmed in a laboratory. Residents are encouraged to take a “hands off” approach to wild animals to reduce their risk of exposure. Parents also need to educate their children of the dangers.

Keeping pets up to date with vaccinations will not only keep them from getting rabies but also provide a barrier of protection for you if your animal is bitten by a rabid animal. 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 others 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.”