



Media Release

**For Immediate Release
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BAT TESTS POSITIVE FOR RABIES IN TAZEWELL COUNTY

Tazewell County officials have received a report that a bat recently collected in Tazewell County has tested positive for rabies. This is the second year in a row (October 2023) in which a bat has tested positive for rabies in Tazewell County. This comes after not having a positive test from June 2020-October 2023.

Bats are more active this time of year, which means the possibility of exposure to rabies increases. Tazewell County Animal Control (TCAC) would like to remind residents to avoid bat exposure and keep their pets' vaccinations up to date.

Bats are the primary carriers of rabies in Illinois. Rabies is a virus that affects the nervous system of humans and other mammals. Rabies is often transmitted through the bite of an infected animal like bats, skunks, or raccoons.

The following guidelines can help protect people and pets from rabies:

- If you see a bat in your home, leave the room and close the door if possible. Place a towel under the door to block escape and call TCAC at 309-925-3370, after hours call 309-346-3132 option 1. Do not attempt to handle or kill the bat. TCAC will respond to capture and impound bats that residents have encountered inside the living space of a home in Tazewell County.
- Report all animal bites to TCAC. If someone has been bitten or scratched by a wild or domestic animal, wash the affected area thoroughly with soap and water and seek medical attention immediately.
- Notify TCAC if you suspect you, another household member, or a pet has been exposed. This includes if the bat was seen in a room with a sleeping child or adult.

- If you find a dead bat in your home, call TCAC for instructions.
- Tightly close all outside doors to prevent bats from entering living quarters or occupied spaces in homes, churches, schools, and other similar areas where they might have contact with people and pets.
- Carefully examine your home for holes that might allow bats entry. Any opening larger than a quarter inch by half inch should be caulked. Board up any openings to your attic, basement, porch, or garage. Cap chimneys with screens.
- Be sure dogs and cats are updated on rabies vaccinations by consulting with your veterinarian. Vaccinated pets serve as a buffer between rabid wildlife and humans.
- Do not handle wild or domestic animals that have been trapped. Contact TCAC for assistance.
- Encourage children to immediately tell an adult if they are bitten or scratched by an animal. Teach children not to approach or touch any animal they do not know.

For more information about rabies and bats contact Tazewell County Animal Control at
309-925-3370

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