

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT



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www.weldhealth.org



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Bat found at Jones Park in Pierce tests positive for rabies

Weld County, Colorado – A rabid bat was found on Saturday June 9 at Jones Park in the town of Pierce, about 8 miles north of Eaton. The bat was found under a picnic table. It appeared sick and couldn't fly. Tests later confirmed it had rabies. "If anyone thinks they or their pet may have had contact with the bat, they need to contact the Health Department immediately," said Mark E. Wallace, MD, MPH, Executive Director of the Weld County Health Department. "Rabies is fatal once symptoms begin, but can be treated before symptoms appear."

Any mammal, including humans, is at risk for contracting rabies. The risk of human exposure to rabies increases when pets and domestic animals are not properly vaccinated. "If you touch or hold a rabid animal, such as a bat, your risk is much higher," said Wallace. Rabies can infect many wild animals, including foxes, skunks, feral cats, raccoons, coyotes, and bats. Health officials recommend all domestic animals such as cats, dogs, horses and livestock be vaccinated against rabies by a licensed veterinarian.

Signs of rabies include increases in saliva and drooling, nocturnal animals seen out during the daytime, slow or difficult movement, and confusion or aggression. Rabies is a disease caused by a virus that affects the nervous system. Rabies causes inflammation of the brain and spinal cord and is transmitted in saliva through the bite of an infected animal. The virus can also be transmitted in saliva to an open cut, scratch, or wound. If a person suspects they have been exposed to rabies, they should contact their medical provider immediately. Medicine is available to prevent rabies if started before symptoms appear.

To prevent and reduce exposure to rabies:

- Do not feed, touch, or handle wild animals and be cautious of stray dogs and cats.
- Most bats do not have rabies; however, if a bat is acting strange, lying on the ground, or out during the daylight hours, it may be sick with rabies. Never touch a bat.
- Have dogs, cats, horses, and livestock vaccinated regularly by a licensed veterinarian.

If anyone, including pets, contacted a bat in Jones Park, please call the Weld County Health Department at (970) 304-6415 (Monday – Friday, 8 AM – 5 PM). After hours, call Weld County Dispatch at (970) 350-9600 and dial Option 4. For a map of identified rabies in Weld County, visit: https://www.weldgov.com/departments/health_and_environment/environmental_health/animal_related_diseases/rabies_surveillance/

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