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For Immediate Release

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Rabies Reminder

Collier: A bat found on Isle of Capri in Collier County recently tested positive for rabies. Although no humans were exposed in this particular case, it is an appropriate reminder that all residents should be aware rabies is present in the wild animal population, and domestic animals are at risk if not vaccinated. In Florida, raccoons, bats and foxes are the animals most frequently diagnosed with rabies. Other animals that are at high risk for rabies include skunks, otters, coyotes, bobcats, and stray or unvaccinated cats, dogs and ferrets.

Rabies is a disease of the nervous system and is fatal to warm blooded animals and humans. Rabies is transmitted through exposure to the saliva and nervous tissue from a rabid animal through a bite, scratch, or contact with mucous membranes such as the eyes, nose, or mouth. The Collier County Health Department works with Collier County Domestic Animal Services in responding to incidents of animal bites, tests animals for rabies through the Department of Health state laboratory, and quarantines animals as necessary.

The following are steps you can take to protect yourself and your loved ones against rabies:
Keep rabies vaccinations up to date for all pets.
Keep your pets under direct supervision so they do not come in contact with wild animals. If your pet is bitten by a wild animal, seek veterinary assistance for the animal immediately and contact Collier County Domestic Animal Services at (239) 252-7387.

Do not handle, feed, or unintentionally attract wild animals with open garbage cans or litter.
Do not leave pet food outside.
Never adopt wild animals or bring them into your home.
Prevent bats from entering living quarters where they might come in contact with people and pets. Bats frequently colonize under barrel tile and other similarly designed roofs.

Rabies Fact Sheet

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Anyone who is bitten or scratched by wild or stray animals should report the incident to their doctor immediately, as well as to Collier County Domestic Animal Services (239-252-7387) and the Collier County Health Department (239-252-2690).