

NEWS

Date: September 6, 2016

Contact: Christine Myron, Public Information Officer
(208) 327-8639 | Cell: (208) 871-1712

Number of Rabid Bats Above Average in Ada County *Public Health Urges Precautions*

Boise — The Central District Health Department (CDHD) is urging people to take precautions to avoid contact with bats and protect their animals during an above-average season of rabid bats. Seven bats have been confirmed with rabies in Ada County since June. Last year, Ada County saw just two rabid bats — and 10 bats statewide tested positive for rabies. To-date, 13 bats have tested positive for rabies in Idaho. Seven of those bats have been found in Ada County.

“This season, rabid bats have been confirmed in all types of environments — from neighborhoods near downtown Boise to Meridian, and Bown Crossing. Rabid bats are possible in all areas of Idaho. We have seen the number of phone calls about bat encounters increase in the past weeks,” said Sarah Correll, Central District Health Department (CDHD) Epidemiologist.

Bats are the main source of rabies exposures in Idaho. The fall months can bring an increase in bat interactions as many bats begin migrating to warmer climates.

Rabies can cause a fatal illness. People should call their health care provider if they have been bitten or scratched by a bat. Medical therapy given to people soon after a possible rabies exposure is extremely effective in preventing rabies. Parents are encouraged to talk to their children about the importance of not touching bats or other wild animals, because doing so can have serious medical consequences. Animal owners should seek veterinary care promptly if they suspect their pet has been exposed to a rabid animal, even if the pet’s vaccinations are up-to-date.

One warning sign that a bat may carry rabies is daytime activity, which is unusual behavior for healthy bats. However, not all rabid animals show signs of illness.

To protect yourself and your pets, CDHD offers the following tips:

- Do not touch a bat with your bare hands.
- If you have had an encounter with a bat, seek medical attention.
- If you come in contact with a bat, save the bat in a container without touching it and contact your district health department to ask about testing the bat for rabies.
- Always vaccinate your pets for rabies, including horses. Pets may encounter bats outdoors or in the home — unvaccinated pets who have been exposed may require euthanasia.

- Bat-proof your home or cabin by plugging all holes in the siding and maintaining tight-fitting screens on windows.

For more information on bats and rabies, visit www.cdc.gov/rabies. To track the number of rabid bats in Idaho, visit: <http://rabies.dhw.idaho.gov>

Central District Health Department (CDHD), Public Health District IV, is one of seven public health districts within the state of Idaho, serving Ada, Boise, Elmore, and Valley counties. The health districts were established in 1970 under Idaho Code to ensure essential public health services are made available to protect the health of all citizens of the state — no matter how large or small their county population. To learn more about the programs and services offered by CDHD, visit www.cdhd.idaho.gov.

###