



District 2 Public Health

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Banks, Dawson, Forsyth, Franklin, Habersham, Hall, Hart, Lumpkin, Rabun, Stephens, Towns, Union and White Counties

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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RABIES IDENTIFIED IN FOUR CATS IN NORTH HALL COUNTY

GAINESVILLE, GA –Encounters between wild animals and domestic pets, including some that involve people, sometimes occur in our area. Incidents of exposure are common but can be prevented if residents take precautions to protect themselves and their pets.

Maintaining current rabies vaccinations for your pets and keeping them away from wild animals is the best way to protect them. To protect yourself and your family, do not attempt to capture or feed feral or stray cats. Leave them and other wild animals alone.

People should always avoid contact with unfamiliar dogs, cats, and wild animals. This includes feeding or attempting to help an animal that appears injured. If you feed your pets outside, pick up any uneaten food so wild animals, including feral cats, will not be attracted to your property. Feral cats are born in the wild and should be treated as wild animals.

Rabies is a viral infection transmitted in the saliva of infected mammals. **It is almost always fatal.** Wildlife remains the most common source of infection for both humans and domestic animals in the United States. Rabies in humans can be prevented by eliminating exposures to rabid animals or by providing exposed persons prompt medical treatment. Post-exposure vaccine can be found at all the major hospitals within District 2 and information about vaccine assistance programs can be obtained from your local Environmental Health Office.

There have been four cases of rabies found in cats in Hall County this year, all of which have been in the North Hall area. When rabies positives are identified in Hall County, Hall County Animal Services provides notice to the public through media releases, as well as signage within a 1-mile radius of the incident area. In addition, Hall County Animal Services has been working in partnership with Best Friends Animal Society to

reduce the number of feral cats in the community by providing free or low cost spay/neuter options and vaccinations through the [Community Cat Program](#).

The Georgia Department of Natural Resources has rigid regulations that prohibit the keeping of wild animals. If you see a wild animal acting strangely, avoid the animal and contact the DNR Ranger Hotline at: 1-800-241-4113.

There is no better time than now to ensure that all your pets are currently vaccinated. Rabies prevention information can be found at <https://phdistrict2.org/>. For more information about rabies, ask your veterinarian, local health department or go to <http://dph.georgia.gov/rabies>.

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