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RABID RACCOON ATTACKS DOMESTIC DOG

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Tampa, Fla. – A raccoon attacked a domestic dog in the W. Thornton Avenue area of Tampa (zip code: 33611). The incident occurred on November 30, around 9:30 p.m. The dog was in its yard when the raccoon came out of a tree and attacked it. The dog's owner killed the raccoon and it was taken to a veterinarian office. The Florida Department of Health in Hillsborough County was notified and tested the raccoon for rabies. On December 6, lab results revealed it was positive for rabies.

The dog had current vaccination against rabies and is expected to be okay. As a precaution, the Florida Department of Health in Hillsborough County is recommending the owner quarantine the dog for 45 days. This means the dog should not have contact with other animals or humans outside of the household during this period. Additionally, the dog has received a booster for rabies.

DOH-Hillsborough will be informing those who live or work within a 500 radius of where the rabid raccoon was found about the incident.

Anyone who has been bitten, scratched, or exposed to the saliva of any wild animal or an animal that is acting unusual should always report the exposure to the local health department and visit their preferred health care provider. The contact number for DOH-Hillsborough is (813) 307-8059.

Rabies is a disease of the nervous system and is fatal to warm blooded animals and humans.

People should avoid contact with any animal that lives in the wild. Some may be tempted to feed or help the animal, but it isn't worth the risk. The only definitive way to determine if an animal has rabies is a lab examination. Last year, three animals exposed ten people.

In 2018, Hillsborough County has identified ten rabid animals (six cats, two bats and two raccoons) that exposed 20 people and five domestic dogs to the disease. It's clear that there are rabid animals living throughout the county and state.

An animal with rabies could infect other wild animals or domestic animals that have not been vaccinated against rabies. All domestic animals should be vaccinated against

rabies and all wildlife contact should be avoided, particularly raccoons, bats, foxes, skunks, otters, bobcats, and coyotes.

Residents and visitors are advised to take the following precautions:

- Keep rabies vaccinations up to date for all pets.
- If your pet is bitten by a wild animal, seek veterinary assistance for the animal immediately and contact the Hillsborough County Pet Resource Center at (813) 744-5660.
- **Do not** handle, feed, or unintentionally attract wild animals with open garbage cans or litter.
- **Never** adopt wild animals or bring them into your home.
- Teach children **never** to handle unfamiliar animals, wild or domestic, even if they appear friendly.
- Prevent bats from entering living quarters or occupied spaces in homes, churches, schools, and other similar areas, where they might encounter people and pets.
- Persons who have been bitten or scratched by wild or domestic animals should seek medical attention and report the injury to the Florida Department of Health in Hillsborough County at (813) 307-8059.

For further information on rabies, go to <http://www.floridahealth.gov/diseases-and-conditions/rabies/index.html> or call the Florida Department of Health in Hillsborough County at (813) 307-8000, or (813) 744-5660.

The Department works to protect, promote, and improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county, and community efforts.

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