



PIMA COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Cooler Temperatures Invite Chance Encounters with Wildlife

Pima County, Ariz. (Oct. 27, 2011) As southern Arizona weather becomes more enjoyable for outdoor activities, the Pima County Health Department reminds residents and visitors to be cautious when encountering wildlife.

The wild animals that people may run into while enjoying nature can bring them face to face with the rabies virus. Rabid animals have been found not only in their natural habitat, but also in urban locations throughout Pima County.

Rabies is a dangerous virus that attacks the brain and nervous system. The disease is carried by infected wild animals like bats, skunks, foxes, javelina, and bobcats. Contact with the saliva of an infected animal through a bite or an existing open skin lesion can allow the virus to pass easily to humans and pets. There are no known effective treatments for people with symptoms of a rabies infection. However, it is possible to prevent rabies if immunization is given soon after a bite or exposure.

The best way to protect your family, pets and yourself from rabies is to avoid close contact with wild animals by following these tips:

- Enjoy wild animals from a distance, even if they appear friendly.
- Never feed wildlife or leave food or garbage that might attract them.
- If you see a wild animal acting strangely, report the sighting to Pima County Animal Care at (520) 243-5900.
- Reduce the possibility of pets getting exposed to wildlife by not letting them roam free.
- Ensure all pets are up-to-date with their vaccinations.

Take all these precautions to reduce your and your pet's risk for contracting rabies. Remember, if you have contact with animal saliva, are bitten by a wild animal, or see a wild animal acting strangely call Pima Animal Care Center at (520) 243-5900.

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