

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 29, 2016

Twin Falls County resident is receiving treatment for rabies after exposure to a bat

Twin Falls, ID – A Twin Falls County resident is currently receiving treatment after an encounter with an aggressive bat. According to Tanis Maxwell, an Epidemiologist with South Central Public Health District, “On Monday, the individual was working in the Mini-Cassia area when the encounter occurred.” The individual is receiving treatment through a local medical facility.

The bat was captured and sent to the Idaho Bureau of Laboratories for testing. On Wednesday, the Idaho Bureau of Laboratories sent the results to Maxwell. “The bat tested positive for rabies,” Maxwell said. Since June, nineteen animals statewide have tested positive for rabies. This is the first animal in south central Idaho to test positive for rabies, since June.

Rabies can only be confirmed in a laboratory, however any bat that is active by day or is found in a place where bats are not usually seen (for example, in a room in your home or on the lawn), or is unable to fly is far more likely than others to be rabid. Such bats are often the most easily approached. Therefore, it is best never to handle any bat. If an individual is scratched or bitten, they should receive medical attention as soon as possible. Maxwell noted, “An untreated rabies infection is virtually always fatal.”

The Health District urges residents to avoid contact with bats. To protect yourself and your pets;

- Do not touch a bat with your bare hands;
- If you have an encounter with a bat, seek medical attention immediately;
- If safe to do so, capture the bat and save it in a container without touching it. Then contact South Central Public Health District to arrange for testing. There is no charge for this service;
- Always vaccinate your pets, including horses. Pets may encounter bats outdoors or in the home;
- Plug all holes in your cabin or home. Pay attention to gaps in the siding and maintain tight-fitting screens on windows and vents.

Visit phd5.idaho.gov/rabies for more information. To arrange for an animal to be tested, call 208-737-5966.

Contact Jeff Pierson, 208-737-5945

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