

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 16, 2026 | Contact: Amy Dillon, Public Information Officer, adillon@phd5.id.gov

SCPHD advises caution after rabid bat confirmed in Blaine County

SOUTH CENTRAL IDAHO – A bat caught in Blaine County tested positive for rabies this week. While there have been other cases of rabies-infected bats in other parts of Idaho in 2026, this is the first bat this year to test positive for rabies in South Central Idaho.

The virus can cause a fatal disease in both people and their pets. South Central Public Health District (SCPHD) reminds residents to take precautions around bats and make sure their dogs, cats, and horses are vaccinated for rabies.

“Because bat bites can be difficult to notice, people don't always realize they've been exposed,” said Jacob Ward, SCPHD Epidemiology Program Manager. “When there is any possibility of contact with a bat, it's important to seek medical advice right away. Timely treatment is highly effective at preventing rabies after an exposure.”

Bats play an important role in the ecosystem and most do not carry rabies. If you see a bat, please give it plenty of space. Do not try to touch, kill, or trap the bat unless you are concerned someone came into contact with the animal. Only attempt a bat capture if you can do it safely and avoid direct contact with the animal at all times.

If you have contact with a bat and need it tested, please call (208) 737-5912 or (208) 737-5971 to speak with a health district epidemiologist. **Do not bring live bats into health district offices.**

While most bats are harmless and do not carry rabies, they are the only animal in Idaho to naturally carry the virus. Most animals, including household pets, can become exposed to the virus by interacting with sick bats.

To protect yourself from rabies:

- Do not touch a bat with your bare hands.

- If there is any potential physical exposure to a bat, seek medical attention immediately. Save the bat in a container without touching it (wear thick gloves), and contact your district health department to arrange for rabies testing.
- Always vaccinate your pets, including horses. Pets may encounter bats outdoors or in the home.
- Bat-proof your home or cabin by plugging all holes in the siding and maintain tight-fitting screens on windows. Bats can enter through holes the size of a quarter. Typically, bat-proofing is more easily done after most bats have migrated away in the fall.

For more information and educational resources, check out:

More information on bats and rabies:

healthandwelfare.idaho.gov/health-wellness/diseases-conditions/rabies

What to do if you encounter a bat in or near your home:

idfg.idaho.gov/article/found-bat-your-home-dont-panic-here-are-steps-protect-yourself-and-bat

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