



IDAHO DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH & WELFARE

www.healthandwelfare.idaho.gov



<https://www.cdhd.idaho.gov/>

NEWS RELEASE--FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: June 22, 2020

Media contacts:

Niki Forbing-Orr
DHW Public Information Manager
(208) 334-0668
Niki.Forbing-Orr@dhw.idaho.gov

Christine Myron
CDH Public Information Officer
(208) 871-1712
CMyron@cdh.idaho.gov

Two rabid bats found in Ada County; health officials urge caution around all bats

Idaho Public Health officials are reporting that two bats have tested positive for rabies and were found in separate homes in Ada County. These are the first rabid bats to be detected this season.

“Rabies is a fatal viral illness without proper medical management. People should call their healthcare providers promptly if they believe they may have been bitten or scratched by a bat. Medical therapy administered to people after an animal bite or other exposure is extremely effective in preventing rabies,” says Dr. Leslie Tengelsen, state public health veterinarian. “It is extremely important for people to avoid all bats and other wild animals, particularly if they appear sick or are acting aggressively or abnormally.”

Bats are the only natural carriers for the virus in Idaho and should always be avoided. No area of the state is considered rabies-free. While most bats do not

carry rabies, an average of 15 rabid bats are detected in Idaho each year from all areas of the state.

The most common ways people may encounter a bat is when a pet brings one into the home or a bat enters a home through a small opening or open windows or doors. People may also wake up to find a bat in the room and can't be sure that they weren't bitten while they slept.

Bats should be tested for rabies if there is any chance a person or pet might have been in contact with the bat. There is no need to test a bat that has had no interaction with people or pets.

To protect yourself and your pets, public health officials recommend these guidelines:

- Never touch a bat with your bare hands.
- If you have had contact with a bat or wake up to find a bat in your room, seek medical advice immediately.
- Call your local public health district about testing a bat for rabies. If it is determined that you or your pet may be at risk of rabies, the bat can be tested for free through the state public health laboratory.
- If you must handle a bat, always wear thick gloves.
- If the bat is alive, save it in a non-breakable container with small air holes.
- If it is dead, the bat should be double-bagged and sealed in clear plastic bags.
- Never put a live bat in a freezer to kill it.
- Contact your local Idaho Department of Fish and Game office about bat-proofing your home. Maintain tight-fitting screens on windows.
- Always vaccinate your dogs, cats, ferrets, and horses. Even indoor pets could be exposed to rabies if a bat gets into a home. Household pets and other animals can be exposed to the virus by playing with sick bats that can no longer fly normally.
- Teach your children to avoid bats and to let an adult know if they find one.

For more information about rabies:

<https://healthandwelfare.idaho.gov/Health/DiseasesConditions/RabiesInformation/tabid/176/Default.aspx> or call your local [public health district](#).

Niki Forbing-Orr

Public Information Manager
Idaho Department of Health & Welfare
Media line: 208-334-0668
Desk: 208-334-0618
Cell: 208-514-5848
www.healthandwelfare.idaho.gov