



Lake County General Health District

NEWS RELEASE
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LAKE COUNTY GENERAL HEALTH DISTRICT

SECOND RABID SKUNK REPORTED IN 2011 IN LAKE COUNTY

The Ohio Department of Health has confirmed that a skunk collected by the Lake County General Health District (LCGHD) has tested positive for rabies. The skunk was reported to the LCGHD in early September as having an encounter with two unvaccinated pet dogs in a Northwest Mentor residential neighborhood north of Lakeshore Blvd. and west of SR 306. Due to the encounter with a known rabid animal and being unvaccinated, the dogs will be subject to a strict 6-month quarantine period.

This marks the second skunk this year that has been identified with rabies in Lake County in 2011. The first rabid skunk was located about two miles west in the northern, middle portion of Mentor in mid July and was captured during a routine Trap, Vaccinate and Release (TVR) operation carried out by the USDA Wildlife Services. Like other rabid skunks in Lake County in the past, this skunk is believed to have been infected with raccoon strain rabies (RSR) and is part of the wider raccoon rabies epidemic in Lake County since 2004. This is the 6th RSR animal in NE Ohio in 2011, the 15th since 2008 and the 136th since the outbreak began in 2004.

Residents are reminded of the AVC's of rabies prevention to stay healthy:

- **Avoid** contact with wild, sick or injured animals, and animals you don't know. Any pet or human encounter with skunks, bats, raccoons, fox or coyotes should be reported to the LCGHD for evaluation of the circumstances to determine if a possible rabies exposure has occurred. In circumstances where there is any reasonable probability of exposure, if at all possible, the biting animal should be safely captured so that it can be tested for rabies. Teach children never to handle unfamiliar animals, wild or domestic, even if they appear friendly. "Love your own, leave other animals alone" is a good principle for children to learn.
- **Vaccinate** your pets against rabies. Rabies vaccination of all pet cats, dogs and ferrets is mandatory in Lake County. This requirement also applies to indoor pets because, in some instances, a potentially rabid animal (especially bats) may get into the house. As a result, it is important for pet owners to have their pets regularly vaccinated against rabies and always keep the shots up-to-date. Vaccinating pets against rabies protects the pet, as well as family members, against the threat of this fatal disease.
- **Call** your doctor or veterinarian if you or your pets are bitten.

Your local health departments in northeast Ohio are working hard to protect you against rabies by distributing rabies vaccine for raccoons to eat, however the vaccine is not effective in skunks. A new vaccine for skunks is currently undergoing trials and it is hoped it will be available for use locally next year. There has also been a very effective trap, vaccinate, and release program that immunizes raccoons against rabies in target areas. Citizens can help by contacting the Lake County General Health District at (440) 350-2543 to report dead or

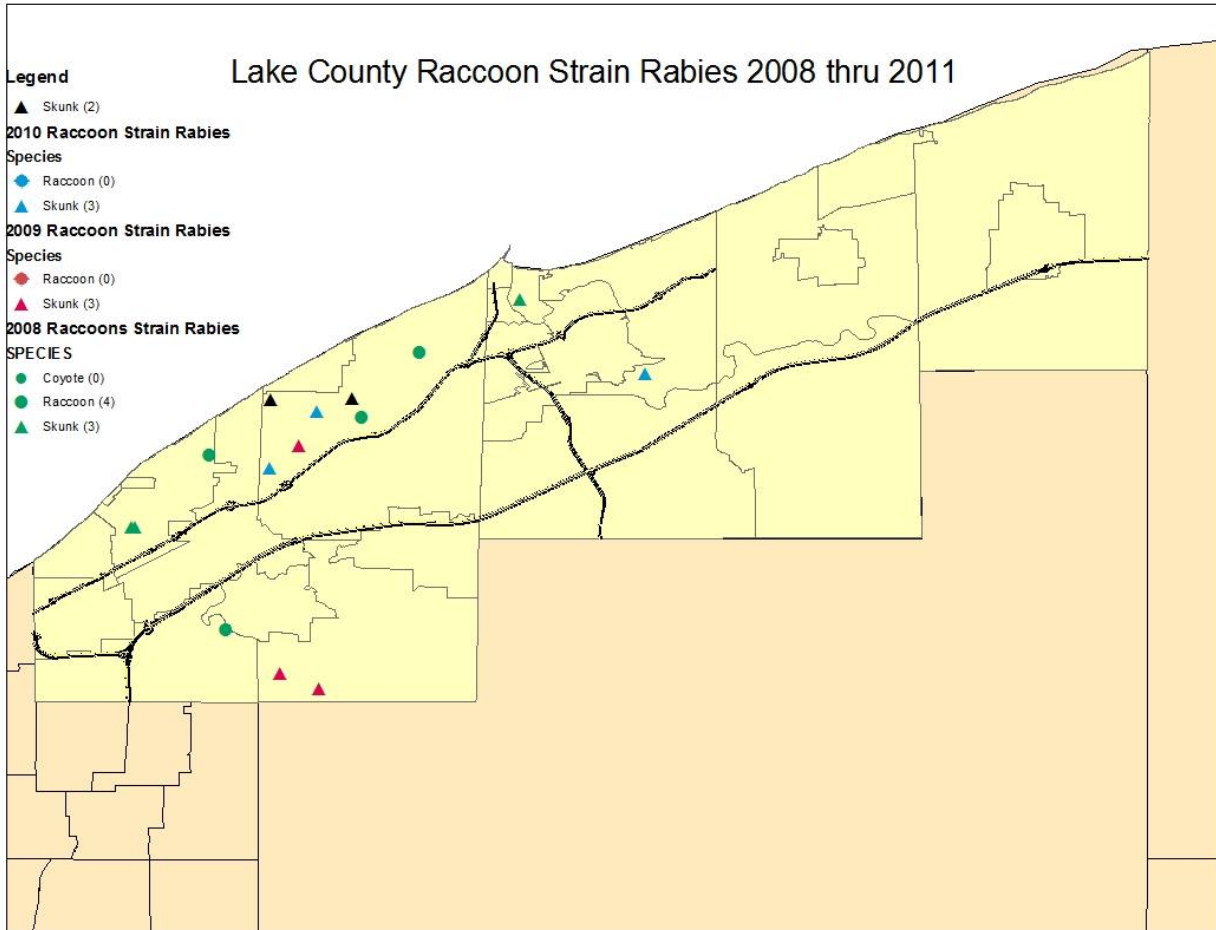
sick animals and animals with odd behavior. Pet owners are also cautioned to use care when letting dogs or cats outside in the evening. Put on a light, if available, then check for skunks or other wild animals, even inside fenced-in enclosures, before allowing animals access.

For additional information on raccoon rabies please visit:

<http://www.lcghd.org/rabies.aspx>

<http://www.odh.ohio.gov/odhPrograms/dis/zoonoses/rabies/rab1.aspx>

<http://www.cdc.gov/rabies/>



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