



Department of Health
Agency of Human Services



Animal Rehabilitator Reminds Vermonters: Do Not Touch Wild Animals



News Release: July 17, 2013

Contact:

Vermont Department of Health
802-863-7281

UNDERHILL - Nancy Carey, a volunteer wildlife rehabilitator from Underhill, received two baby skunks from Barre in early July that tested positive for rabies. One had been handled by 11 people who had to be treated for exposure to rabies. It also came in contact with three pets.

Carey worked with Dr. Robert Johnson, Health Department public health veterinarian, to convince everyone who may have been exposed to get vaccinated to prevent a potentially fatal disease that could have been avoided if everyone followed one simple rule: Do not touch wild animals.

The Vermont Departments of Health and Fish & Wildlife are urging people to leave wildlife in the wild, both out of concern for human health and the well-being of the wild animals involved.

“Wild animals are not pets. Once there has been a possible exposure,” Carey said, “we need to find out whether anyone was licked, bitten, scratched, or handled the animal with their bare hands. This is a very serious situation.”

Dr. Johnson said the work of the state’s 14 volunteer wildlife rehabilitators is often unheralded, but the work they do is critical to protecting public health and preventing the spread of disease.

“Most veterinary clinics do not treat wild animals, only domestic, and the work of the rehabilitators – and Nancy Carey in particular – is truly remarkable,” Dr. Johnson said.

In many cases, young wildlife that appear abandoned really are not. They are best left alone so their mothers can care for them. Rabid animals cannot be rehabilitated, and neither can deer or moose.

“If you care, let us know it is there. Call first. If it is in harm’s way - a parking lot or in your dog or cat’s mouth, use gloves or a blanket, get it out of harm’s way and call us. That way we can determine if it needs to be rescued.”

For guidance on what to do if you find a wild animal (such as a baby animal that appears to have been abandoned by its mother), contact the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department (802-241-3700), and visit:

http://www.vtfishandwildlife.com/wildlife_rehabilitation.cfm for a wildlife rehabilitator in your area.

Avoid any wild animal that is acting strangely and contact the Vermont Rabies Hotline: 1-800-472-2437 (1-800-4-RABIES), Monday through Friday 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. The rabies hotline for anyone outside Vermont is 802-223-8697.

For more information visit: <http://healthvermont.gov/prevent/rabies/Rabies.aspx>

For health news, alerts and information visit healthvermont.gov

Join us on [Facebook](#)

Follow us on [Twitter](#)

###

Vermont Department of Health | 108 Cherry Street | Burlington, VT 05402
Voice: 802-863-7200 | In Vermont 800-464-4343 | Fax: 802-865-7754 | TTY/TDD: Dial 711 first

|||

