



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE PUBLICATION

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RABID BAT FOUND IN NORTH COUNTY

County Health Officials Urge Public to Not Touch Dead Bats, Other Dead Animals

The County of San Diego Health and Human Services Agency (HHSA) is reporting that a dead bat found in Vista has tested positive for rabies. This brings the total number of bats that have tested positive for rabies this year to five.

The infected bat was brought to the Vista Petco at 520 Hacienda Drive on Sunday, July 10. Petco immediately contacted authorities for assistance.

Two unidentified boys, approximately 12 to 13 years old, brought the bat to the store. The boys' families are encouraged to contact County health officials at (619) 692-8499 to determine if they were exposed to rabies.

"This is a reminder to the public to stay away from bats and other wild animals to prevent possible exposure to rabies," said Wilma Wooten, M.D., M.P.H., County Public Health Officer. "If you see a bat, dead or alive, don't touch it."

While bats and other wild animals might be interesting to look at, touching them—even when they're dead—could expose you to rabies, a disease that can be deadly.

The bat's small teeth can make a bite difficult to find. Rabies transmission may also occur if a bat's saliva comes in contact with a person's open wounds or mucous membranes such as the eyes, nose or mouth.

Bats are most often observed by people during the summer months when young bats leave the roost, insects are abundant, and people leave windows open at night to counter the heat. If you find a bat in your home or on your property, do not touch it; open doors and windows for the bat to fly out.

If risky contact with a bat does occur, wash the affected area thoroughly with soap and water and get medical advice immediately. The bat should be safely captured and picked up by the animal control agency that serves your area.

Rabies in humans can be prevented by avoiding contact with wild, stray, and unknown domestic animals; ensuring pets are up-to-date on rabies vaccinations; and receiving prompt medical advice following animal bites and other significant exposures to potentially rabid animals.

For more information about rabies and bats, please visit the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\) website](http://www.cdc.gov).

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