

## Rabies



### Rabies in Bastrop County

In 2011, five positive rabies specimens have been reported in Bastrop County (two bats and three skunks). The lack of food source and water due to the dry conditions increases the likelihood of native wildlife coming into contact with us and/or our pets. Rabies can be carried by warm-blooded animals; however, the top 5 species in Texas are: raccoons, skunks, foxes, coyotes and bats.

### What is Rabies?

Rabies is an acute viral disease that attacks the brain and nervous system. It is a zoonotic disease which means it is passed from animals to humans. Humans should avoid contact with wild animals and take precautions to protect their pets as they may come into contact with wildlife.

### Why Vaccinate Your Pets?

Rabies is preventable by vaccinating your pets. Rabies vaccinations are also required by State Law.

### Deterring Wildlife?

If you are feeding wildlife, you should stop. Wildlife will lose their fear of people through a prolonged period of direct and/or indirect feeding.

Make sure you are not indirectly feeding wildlife: If you are feeding your pets outdoors, keep the area clean between feedings. Pet food left outdoors will attract wildlife right to your yard or back door. Keep all trash around your yard contained and secure. Keep compost in a secure container that prevents wildlife from getting into it.

Remove bird feeders if problem wildlife species are seen around the feeders. The seed in bird feeders attracts many small- and medium-sized mammals which in turn attract larger mammals.

### What Attracts Skunks?

Skunks are attracted to several food sources. The best plan of action is to remove their food source. Skunks dine on insects, rodents and garbage. Removing these food sources makes it difficult for the skunk to find food and they will eventually move on to other areas. This is probably one of the easiest and most effective long term solutions. A safe and non-toxic way to control insects is quite simple, just spread around some diatomaceous earth. Diatomaceous Earth is a non-toxic, safe substance made up from crushed fossils of freshwater organisms and marine life.

### Protect Yourself and Family.

- Do not handle wildlife.
- Ensure your pets are current on their rabies vaccinations.
- Report all dog and cat bites to a human and any pet exposure to wildlife.

### Rabies Vaccinations Are Available

- Your local veterinarian clinic (there are several in Bastrop County)
- At low-cost rabies clinics (at local businesses, check the Internet for times and locations)
- The Bastrop County Animal Shelter  
(on most Wednesdays 10am–1pm – please call (512) 581-4080 for more information)