



## Buncombe County Health and Human Services

Public Health ~ Adult & Children's Protective Services ~ Economic Services & Work Strategies  
Parks, Greenways & Recreation ~ Human Resources, Services Support & Finance

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For more information call:  
(828) 775-1321

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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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#### **Rescued Fox May Have Rabies; Request for Assistance from Public**

The Asheville Police Department Animal Services Unit and the Buncombe County Department of Health are seeking the public's help in locating an injured and potentially rabid fox.

The juvenile fox was found by a motorist at the intersection of Sardis Road and Sand Hill Road on Monday June 3. It was eventually transported to Haw Creek Animal Hospital, where it was given to another, unidentified person possibly driving a white sedan who reportedly said they would transport the fox to a wildlife rehabilitation facility. In that time, four people came in contact with the animal, including a young girl.

Though no bites were reported, contact with a wild fox still presents a risk of exposure to rabies, especially given that a fox from the same area recently tested positive for rabies. Rabies is a disease caused by a virus that is spread through the saliva of an infected animal. When contracted by humans, rabies is fatal unless early treatment is sought. There is no cure once symptoms develop, so immediate treatment is important to prevent the disease.

Anyone with information as to the location of the fox or the identity of the person who was in possession of or in contact with the animal is urgently requested to contact the Asheville Police Department at (828) 252-1110. For questions regarding possible rabies exposure contact Buncombe County Department of Health - Communicable Disease program 250-5109.

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HHS Administration  
p. 828.250.5700  
f. 828.250.6235  
PO Box 7408  
Asheville, NC  
28802

Social Services  
p. 828.250.5500  
f. 828.250.6235  
PO Box 7408  
Asheville, NC  
28802

Public Health  
p. 828.250.5000  
f. 828.250.6235  
PO Box 7407  
Asheville, NC  
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Parks, Greenways & Recreation  
p. 828.250.4260  
f. 828.250.6715  
59 Woodfin Place  
Asheville, NC 28801

[buncombecounty.org](http://buncombecounty.org)

Rabies is not unusual among wildlife; however it's important that steps be taken to prevent exposure to the disease among humans and pets. In North Carolina rabies is most common in raccoons, skunks, foxes and bats but has also been found in dogs, cats, horses, cattle and other animals.

The Buncombe County Department of Health makes the following recommendations to prevent the spread of rabies:

- **Keep rabies vaccinations up-to-date for all cats, ferrets, and dogs.**
- **Stay away from wild animals and any animal you don't know.** Keep children and pets away from these animals. Don't try to feed, touch, or play with a wild animal.
- Don't allow pets to run at large.
- Secure garbage in containers with tight-fitting lids, and take them out in the morning of pick up, not the night before. Coyotes and other wildlife will scavenge trash.
- Feed pets indoors or remove food when your pet is finished eating outside. Wild animals are attracted to pet food left outdoors.
- Avoid contact with bats. If you find a bat during daylight hours, it is most likely unhealthy and should not be touched.
- Keep bird-feeder areas clean, and use bird feeders that keep seed off the ground. Foxes are attracted to small animals congregating on the ground. If you see foxes often, remove all feeders.
- Close off crawl spaces under sheds, porches, decks and homes. Some wildlife may use these spaces to rest or to build their dens.

### **Take Action If You Are Bitten**

If you or someone in your family is exposed to a rabid animal, rabies can be prevented through a series of shots called rabies post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP).

If you are bitten by any animal, follow these steps.

1. Immediately wash the wound well with soap and water and see a healthcare provider or go to the Emergency Department of your local hospital.
2. **Contact Animal Control if you or your pet is bitten, to assist in capturing the animal for observation or rabies testing.** If the animal is caught and tested and does not have rabies, you may not need to have post-exposure shots and your pet may not need to be quarantined.

Animal Control phone numbers:

- Asheville City limits - Asheville Police 252-1110
- Buncombe County, Black Mountain – Buncombe County Sheriff’s Office 250-6670

For rabies issues in the municipalities below, call Marc Fowler, Buncombe County Department of Health 250-5036.

- Biltmore Forest
- Montreat
- Weaverville
- Woodfin

3. **For questions regarding rabies exposures contact your local health department.** A trained disease control nurse can talk about your exposure with you and help you decide if rabies vaccines are needed.
  - Buncombe County Department of Health - Communicable Disease program 250-5109

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