



ALLEGHENY COUNTY

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October 5, 2018

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USDA Wildlife Services to Trap, Hand-Vaccinate and Release Healthy Raccoons to Combat Increase in Rabies in Local Community

PITTSBURGH – The Allegheny County Health Department and the United States Department of Agriculture announced today that the agency's Wildlife Services Division will be trapping, hand-vaccinating and releasing healthy raccoons in the City of Pittsburgh's Morningside/Stanton Heights neighborhoods. The action is being taken in response to a recent uptick in rabies, with three rabid raccoons found in the area in recent weeks.

Wildlife Services has also indicated it will be seeking permission from property owners to use cage traps on private, public and commercial properties in Morningside/Stanton Heights. When an unhealthy animal (raccoon, skunk, fox or coyote) is captured, the animal will be euthanized for rabies testing. If additional cases are discovered, Wildlife Services will re-evaluate its strategy to address the recent uptick.

This initiative will not prevent raccoons currently incubating the rabies virus from developing clinical rabies. It will aid in stopping the rabies virus from maintaining itself on the landscape in these areas.

Anyone having questions regarding the initiative can contact the Wildlife Services Western District Office at 724-238-7320.

The Health Department reminds all county residents to always avoid stray and wild animals, even if they appear healthy, to avoid exposure to rabies. If any animal appears to be acting strange or becomes threatening, residents should immediately notify their local animal control service, the police or the Pennsylvania Game Commission. Residents should also make sure that their pets are up-to-date with vaccinations.

Rabies is a virus transmitted by an animal bite or scratch, and exposures due to a bite or scratch are almost always fatal when left untreated. Any individual who is bitten, scratched or otherwise exposed to saliva from a stray or any other animal, should immediately cleanse the contact area with soap and water, seek emergency medical treatment and call the Allegheny County Health Department (412-687-2243) to report the incident.

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