

# **Delaware General Health District**

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# NEWS RELEASE

## **RABID BATS FOUND IN TWO DELAWARE COUNTY COMMUNITIES**

P.O. Box 570            1-3 W. Winter St.      Delaware OH 43015  
740-368-1700          FAX 740-368-1736      Web Site: [www.delawarehealth.org](http://www.delawarehealth.org)

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

For further information contact Jesse Carter, public information officer, at 740-203-2085.

**DELAWARE, Oh., May 27, 2010** – Rabid bats were discovered recently in the Village of Galena and northern Radnor Township in Delaware County.

Area residents are urged to make sure that their pets are vaccinated against rabies, and to be on the lookout for dead bats and wild animals displaying unusual behavior.

Rabies is a viral disease that attacks mammals' nervous systems. It is fatal unless treated. The rabid bats found along State Route 203 north of Radnor and Columbus Street in Galena were the first confirmed in Delaware County this year. Five were found in the county in each of the last two years.

Bats are tested for rabies if they are suspected of exposing persons or pets to the disease. Any bat found inside an occupied home should be tested, as well as any bat that bites or scratches a person or a pet.

Because bats can carry rabies, people need to be very careful when they handle bats, particularly when they are alive. To safely capture a live bat indoors:

- Get children and pets out of the room where the bat is, and shut it inside.
- Put on thick leather gloves. (Always wear leather gloves when you handle a bat, whether it is alive or dead.)
- Wait for the bat to land. (Also, never take your eyes off the bat while you are in the same room with it.)
- Use a plastic bowl or other solid container with an open top to trap the bat. Slide a piece of cardboard or other hard flat material between the container and the

surface where the bat is resting, taking care to not let it escape. Once the cardboard covers the opening, tape it securely to the container.

Anyone who finds a newly deceased bat that should be tested is asked to collect it. Double-bag the carcass and place it in a refrigerator. Do not freeze the bat. Call the Delaware General Health District at 740-368-1700 during weekday business hours, and arrangements will be made to collect the carcass for testing. After hours, residents can call the Health District Information Line, 740-203-2015.

Residents are further urged to follow these precautions against rabies:

- Unless a bat needs to be collected for testing, leave it alone.
- Make sure dogs, cats – particularly barn cats -- and ferrets have up-to-date rabies vaccinations.
- Supervise dogs and cats when they are outside to avoid encounters with wild animals that might be carrying rabies.
- Make sure window screens are always in place and keep doors closed to prevent bats from entering your home.
- Teach children to never touch or play with any unfamiliar, wild, or sick animals.
- Use soap and water to clean any wounds caused by encounters with bats, and seek medical attention immediately.

The Ohio Department of Health reported that a total of 43 rabid bats were found in Ohio last year. No human rabies infections have been confirmed here for many years. Some local residents have received precautionary rabies vaccine treatments, however, because of possible exposure to rabid bats.