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FIRST CONFIRMED CASE OF RABIES REPORTED IN LANE COUNTY

Lane County, Ore –Lane County Public Health announced today a fox found near a residence in Junction City tested positive for rabies. This is the first animal to test positive for rabies in Oregon in 2014.

Rabies is endemic in the bat population but only rarely seen in foxes especially in our county. This is the first report of a rabid fox in Lane County since the 1960's.

"All pet owners should make certain their dogs and cats are vaccinated against rabies. When our pets are protected from rabies, it provides a buffer zone of immune animals between humans and rabid wild animals such as foxes," said Lane County Communicable Disease Supervisor, Cindy Morgan.

The fox was picked up by the Chintimini Wildlife Rehabilitation Center in Corvallis and was tested and confirmed for rabies at Oregon State University, Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory.

Residents and veterinarians should be aware that other animals could be exposed to the rabies virus and should be alert to potential signs of the disease. Rabies is a viral disease that affects the nervous system of humans and mammals. It is almost 100 percent fatal once symptoms begin. The virus is carried in the saliva of an infected animal; transmission can occur when that animal bites, or in rare instances, scratches another. Since about 10% of bats tested every year in Oregon have rabies and most animals acquire rabies by eating or coming into contact with a rabid bat, residents should not handle bats with bare hands and should keep their pets' rabies immunizations up to date. If bitten by a bat, thoroughly clean the bite wound with soap and water and seek medical attention. If possible the bat should be captured and the event reported to Lane County Environmental Health by calling 541-682-4051.

Rabies symptoms in wildlife, particularly foxes and raccoons, include lethargy, walking in circles, loss of muscular coordination, convulsions, irritability or aggressiveness, disorientation, excessive drooling of saliva, and showing no fear of humans.

Reports of erratic or unusual behavior in wildlife should be made to the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife hotline at 1-866-968-2600.

Additional Recommendations Include:

- Vaccinate your pets (dogs and cats) against rabies
- Watch wildlife from a distance. Don't approach or attempt to handle wild animals.
- Do not feed wild animals.
- Keep garbage in secure containers and away from wildlife.
- Feed pets indoors.
- Seal openings in attics, basements, porches, sheds, barns and screen chimneys that might provide access to bats and other wildlife.