

TOWNSHIP OF DENVILLE

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PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Residents Urged to be Vigilant after Rabid Coyote Noted in Denville Township

July 29, 2022 – The Denville Township Health Department has issued a public health advisory for rabies after a coyote in Tourne County Park recently tested positive for rabies. “We urge residents not to feed, approach or permit their pets to interact with coyotes or other animals which are potential carriers of rabies, particularly those which appear sick”, said Dr. Carlos Perez, Jr., Denville Township’s Health Officer.

As per the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP), the coyote is a wild member of the dog family and closely resembles a small German Shepard with the exception of its long snout and bushy, black-tipped tail. Another key difference from a domestic dog is readily noticeable even from a distance: The coyote has a habit of holding its tail below a horizontal position while standing, walking and running. Coyotes play an important role in the ecosystem, helping to keep rodent populations under control.

Coyotes first arrived in New Jersey about 81 years ago and are naturally wary of people. Coyotes are known carriers of rabies. Rabies is a potentially deadly disease caused by a virus. The virus is found in the saliva of rabid animals and is transmitted by bites, scratches, or possibly by contamination of open cuts or eyes with saliva from an animal infected with rabies. Common carriers of the virus are raccoons, skunks, foxes, woodchucks, bats, and feral (stray) unvaccinated animals.

Once an animal becomes infected with rabies, it may display aggressive behavior, may appear to be drunk or injured, and/or have trouble walking. Rabid animals may attempt to bite or attack people and domestic animals. Other signs of rabies infection include disorientation, loss of appetite, excessive irritability, unusual vocalization, and abnormal behavior, restlessness, jumping at noises, excessive salivation, tremors, convulsions, or paralysis. However, some

rabid animals do not display any signs of illness. The Denville Township Health Department recommends the following precautions to protect yourself and your family from possible exposure:

- Avoid direct contact with wild or stray animals.
- Do not feed or touch wild animals.
- Do not allow your cats or dogs to have contact with wild animals.
- Vaccinate your pets against rabies and keep vaccinations up-to-date.
- Never adopt wild animals or bring them into your home.
- Do not feed wildlife and do not leave pet food outdoors for extended periods. Immediately clean-up any spills from exterior bird feeders.
- Ensure that garbage stored outdoors is inaccessible to wildlife. Use tight-fitting lids on garbage cans containing food waste and whenever possible, keep such garbage indoors until collection day.
- Report all injuries and bites to persons or domestic animals to the Denville Township Health Department.
- Residents who have any pets that have been left outside unsupervised should seek veterinary attention for any new injuries of unknown origin.

Residents are encouraged to be alert and to report any sick or injured animals such as coyotes, raccoons, skunks, foxes, woodchucks, bats, and feral (stray) animals to the Denville Township Police Department at (973) 627-4900. Information on coyotes is available on the NJDEP website at <https://dep.nj.gov/njfw/wildlife/coyote/>. Residents can also visit the Denville Township website for information on rabies at www.denvillenj.org. Residents may also call the Denville Township Health Department at (973) 625-8300 for additional information.

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