

April 11, 2013

Sally Ellertson
Public Information Officer
141 West Renfro
Burleson, Texas 76028-4261
817-426-9622
F: 817-426-9390
sellertson@burlesontx.com
www.burlesontx.com

Three more skunks have tested positive for rabies in Burleson, bringing the total to five since Jan. 28.

A skunk found in the 400 block of Dobson Street tested positive March 8. Another one tested positive on March 20 in the 2800 block of Pinnacle. And the last one tested positive April 6 in the 700 block of Ladonna. The first two skunks that tested positive were in the 700 block of Lynnewood on Jan. 28 and the 400 block of Wilshire Boulevard on February 13.

In 2012, the Texas Department of Health reported seven skunks in Johnson County that had reported positive for rabies.

You can prevent exposing your pets to the rabies virus. The most important thing that people can do is to have their animals vaccinated against rabies and keep those vaccinations up to date. State law requires that you have your dogs and cats vaccinated against rabies by a veterinarian at 4 months of age.

DSHS also offers this advice:

- Keep cats and ferrets indoors and keep dogs indoors or in a fenced yard.
- Spay or neuter pets to prevent unwanted animals that may not receive proper care from visiting your animals.
- Teach children not to play with any animal that they do not know, even if the animal seems friendly.
- Avoid animals, both domestic and wild, that appear disoriented, fearless or aggressive. Nighttime animals such as bats, raccoons and skunks that are active in the daytime may be sick.
- Do not touch any wild animal that appears ill or dead. If you live inside the city limits of Burleson, call Burleson Animal Services at 817-426-9283.
- Don't attract wild animals to your yard. Avoid leaving pet food outdoors, and keep garbage in closed containers.

- Stay away from wild animals, and never keep a wild animal as a pet.
- Have domestic ferrets, wolf-dog hybrids and livestock, especially those that are in frequent contact with humans, vaccinated against rabies.

Two dogs killed a skunk on Lynnewood. Those dogs were in a 45-day home isolation. A Burleson animal control officer captured a skunk that was running loose on Wilshire Boulevard/Hwy. 174. There was no known contact with another animal or person, but the Wilshire Boulevard skunk was sent for testing because it was captured during daylight hours. Skunks are nocturnal animals.

Two dogs killed a rabid skunk on Pinnacle. Those dogs were isolated for 90 days because they were not current on rabies vaccinations. Two dogs were also involved on South Dobson. They were isolated for 45 days. And four dogs killed the skunk on Ladonna. They were also isolated for 45 days. In the last three cases, the skunks were found dead the following day.

Rabies continues to be enzootic (disease that is constantly present in an animal) in skunks in Texas. The numbers and percentage of skunks that are positive for rabies varies cyclically.

High-risk animals for rabies in Texas are skunks, bats, raccoons, foxes and coyotes. Rabbits, hares and small rodents such as squirrels, rats, mice, hamsters, guinea pigs, gerbils and chipmunks are rarely found to be infected with rabies and have not been known to cause rabies in humans in the United States. Dogs, cats, horses and cattle are the most frequently reported rabid domestic animals in Texas.

Informative web-sites on Rabies:

<http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/idcu/disease/rabies/>

<http://www.cdc.gov/rabies/>

<http://www.burlesontx.com/DocumentCenter/View/1597>