



PIMA ANIMAL CARE CENTER
4000 N. Silverbell Road
Tucson AZ 85745
www.pimaanimalcare.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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* Rabies and Distemper in Pima County *

Tucson, Arizona – May 4, 2009 –

RABIES UPDATE:

Pima County is experiencing a much higher than normal number of Rabies cases. As of April 24, 2009, 26 skunks, 9 foxes and 1 bat have tested positive for the deadly disease. The positive cases to date appear to be mainly on the far east side of Tucson, running along the base of the Rincon Mountains and in the Sahuarita area. Rabies positive animals, however, have been found in the Dove Mountain area and on the southwest side in the area of Mission Road and Sahuarita Road. Bats, being migratory, are not showing in considerable numbers to date but the cases of rabies are expected to rise sharply as the weather warms.

Rabies is prevalent in Pima County but the amount of cases to date is of concern to authorities as already 2009 is looking to be a record year for rabies within our district. Comparatively, in 2007 from January through April there were 7 confirmed cases. The same time frame in 2008 showed a rise to 19 cases, predominantly in bats and skunks.

The public are urged to take extra precautions to protect themselves and their pets. Ensure that both dogs and cats are vaccinated against rabies by a licensed veterinarian. Do not allow your pets to roam unsupervised or to be walked off leash, especially in the more rural areas.

With bat season fast approaching, try to keep pets indoors. Puppies and kittens too young to receive a rabies vaccination should also be kept inside for their protection. Take steps to 'bat-proof' your house since rabid bats may fly inside a house and expose your family and pets to rabies.

Bats found lying on the ground can also be rabid. Do not let family or pets touch the bat, and teach children not to handle or touch sick or injured animals including bats. Place a box over the bat to contain it and contact Pima Animal Care Center to report the bat and its location.

If you or your pet should come into direct contact with a wild animal and are bitten, or think you may have been bitten, report the incident to the Pima Animal Care Center and seek medical attention immediately.

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DISTEMPER UPDATE:

Pima Animal Care Center is seeing a rise in the number of cases of canine distemper presenting at the shelter. Distemper is a highly contagious virus, spread through contact with infected animals or contact with an infected animal's secretions and excretions (nose discharge, saliva, urine, stool, etc.). Although more commonly seen in domestic dogs, it is also widespread in certain species of wild animals including coyotes and foxes. Although preventable through vaccination, Distemper is a significant cause of death amongst unvaccinated canines.

Keeping dogs confined reduces the risk of contact with other dogs, especially those with an unknown vaccination history. Should your animal begin to show cold like symptoms or become lethargic, a prompt visit to a veterinarian is recommended.

For further information on rabies, distemper or vaccination clinics visit our website at www.pimaanimalcare.org or call the Pima Animal Care Center at 243-5900.

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