

## **Galloway Skunk Tests Positive for Rabies**

### ***Fifth Atlantic County Case of 2016***

The Atlantic County Division of Public Health has reported its fifth confirmed case of rabies this year in a skunk collected from a Leeds Point Road property in Galloway. Each of the four previous cases has involved a raccoon.

The skunk was first discovered on the property by the homeowner and was chased into the woods. It was later found dead in the yard in proximity to the pet dog.

The animal control officer was contacted to remove the skunk. It was then sent to the state lab for testing where it was confirmed positive for rabies on May 18.

An investigation by the Division of Public Health determined that the dog may have been exposed to rabies although no wounds were found. The dog had recently received a 3-year vaccination in April so no booster vaccination was required. However, it has been placed under a 45-day informal confinement as an added precaution.

Rabies is a viral disease that can be fatal if left untreated. Atlantic County reported eight rabies cases in 2015 among bats, skunks, raccoons and a fox. Pet owners are advised to protect their pets with a rabies vaccination.

The Atlantic County Animal Shelter provides a free rabies vaccination clinic for dogs and cats once a month at 240 Old Turnpike Road in Pleasantville. Dogs must be brought on leashes and cats in carriers. For more information call (609) 485-2345 or visit [www.aclink.org/animalshelter](http://www.aclink.org/animalshelter).

Dogs and cats who receive an initial rabies vaccination are not considered immunized until 28 days after the vaccine has been administered, therefore it is strongly recommended that any animal newly vaccinated or those too young to receive the vaccine (less than three months) not be left outdoors unattended. Situations have arisen where pet owners have left unvaccinated or newly vaccinated pets outdoors where they have sustained exposures to known or suspect rabid animals, resulting in euthanasia or six months strict confinement.

Public health officials also advise residents to teach your children to stay away from wild, stray or aggressive animals. Never feed or touch wild animals or try to keep them as pets.

If you are bitten by an animal, wash the wound immediately with soap and water and seek medical attention.

Report all animal bites to the Atlantic County Division of Public Health at 609-645-5971.

For more information about rabies control and precautions to protect your family and your pets, please visit the county Web site at [www.aclink.org/publichealth](http://www.aclink.org/publichealth) or call 609-645-5971.