

Skunk tests positive for rabies virus in King

The Regional Municipality of York has received confirmation a skunk has tested positive for the rabies virus in the Township of King. This is the second confirmed rabies case in York Region in 2019. A bat tested positive for rabies earlier this year. There was no human involvement in both cases.

While the percentage of rabies-infected animals in Ontario is considered low, people should avoid approaching or coming into contact with wildlife and do not keep wild animals as pets in or near your home.

The rabies virus affects the central nervous system of warm-blooded mammals, including humans, and is transmitted through a bite, lick or scratch from an infected animal. While most reported cases involve wild animals such as bats, foxes, raccoons and skunks, dogs and cats are also at risk.

Infection with the rabies virus is usually always fatal. A post-exposure vaccine is available for people who come into contact with a rabid animal.

York Region Public Health investigates all animal exposure incidents. If you have been bitten, scratched or had contact with an animal, immediately wash the wound with soap and water for a minimum of 15 minutes, seek medical attention and report the incident to York Region Public Health at 1-800-361-5653.

Do not feed, touch or allow pets to come into contact with any wild or stray animal.

If a wild animal is found dead, call the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry at 1-888-574-6656.

Avoid moving or attempting to relocate any wild or strange animals, especially those that may be behaving oddly.

Bats and other wild animals can transmit the rabies virus to domestic pets such as dogs and cats.

Ensure your pets are up-to-date on their rabies vaccination; check the York Region Events Calendar for low cost rabies clinics dates and locations

For more information about rabies control and how to Fight the Bite, visit york.ca/rabies