



NEWS RELEASE

City of Los Angeles Department of Animal Services
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BEWARE OF BATS

Los Angeles – Living in California, we are finding that the deadly rabies virus is found mostly in the wild bat population. Skunks also carry rabies to a lesser extent, which is another good reason to avoid those striped creatures. (In 2005, there were 167 rabid bats and 32 rabid skunks). This year we have already found 20 rabid bats in LA County, and 4 of them were found in the City of Los Angeles.

A bat can bite you or your pet, and because this creature has small teeth, the bite may go unnoticed, or leave marks that disappear rapidly.

Generally, bats are not active in the day. If you see one that is in the house or on the lawn, or is unable to fly, there is a good chance that it is rabid. Do not touch the bat! Los Angeles Animal Services should be called to collect the bat and send it to the County Health Dept. Laboratory for testing. It is all right to contain a bat that is sick or flying inside a home until an animal control officer arrives if you can do so safely.

Bats should not be disturbed or captured if they are roosting in attics or caves. **It is actually illegal to kill a bat yourself**, as they are protected by law. If they are living in a building, then professional help must be sought. Bats may only be excluded from the building in the late fall or winter, when there are no babies still in the roost.

It is a good idea to “bat-proof” your home in the fall and winter by caulking holes that are larger than a quarter-inch by a half-inch. The reason to keep bats out of your home is so they don't get into the living spaces where you or your pets can be exposed to rabies. Bats are beneficial because they eat night-flying insects. They also help to disperse seeds and pollen which helps to keep our forests green. But since most of the recent human rabies cases in the US have come from rabies virus of bat origin, it is prudent to be suspicious of bats that we or our pets have been exposed to.

It is best to keep all dogs and cats current on rabies vaccinations, not just because it's the law, but because of the threat of this deadly viral disease. By keeping your pet vaccinated, you are helping to keep yourself safe from rabies. Avoiding contact with wildlife is the safe thing to do. Beware of bats that you may come across, and report any incident where there is a chance you have been bitten.

For more information or assistance call LA Animal Services at
1-888-452LA-PET1/1-888-452-7381
(TTY Hearing impaired: 877-875-8205) or visit the website at www.LAAnimalServices.com.

We create happiness by bringing pets and people together!