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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Grey fox tests positive for rabies in Essex County

Elizabethtown, NY. On September 26, 2025, the NYSDOH Wadsworth Laboratory notified the Essex County Health Department of a lab confirmed case of rabies in a grey fox.

A resident of Au Sable Forks found the animal and reached out to the DEC on August 20, 2025. In this instance, the DEC worked with the resident and a wildlife rehabilitator to arrange for care of the animal. The rehabilitator assessed the fox may be suffering from rabies due to the observation of paralysis of its hindquarters.

Schroon River Animal Hospital euthanized the animal on 8/21/25. A DEC Wildlife Biologist transported the specimen to the NYS DEC Wildlife Lab in Delmar, NY. That lab submitted the specimen for further testing at NYSDOH Wadsworth Lab in Albany, NY, where it returned positive for rabies Friday, 9/26/25.

Essex County Health Department’s investigation included speaking with those known to have had potential exposure to this animal. Through the investigation, the Department has determined there were no known human, pet, livestock or other wildlife exposures.

“This is the seventh lab confirmed case of rabies in Essex County in 2025; six in terrestrial animals, and one bat. This case of rabies is the most north-west in Essex County to date, which is surveillance information we share with our regional USDA Wildlife Specialist” states Director of Health Planning and Promotion for ECHD, Jessica Darney Buehler.

Public Health Director, Linda Beers noted, “The Department is reporting this to the public upon our notification and while there is not current threat to the public from this incident, we do encourage people to stay alert to wildlife and to ensure pets are current with rabies vaccine. We have two free clinics left in 2025.”

To view the 2025 Rabies Clinic Schedule and register your pets, go to <https://essexcountyny.gov/Health/>. The next opportunity to vaccinate your pets for free is Wednesday, October 15, 2025 at the Schroon Lake Fire house or Thursday, November 6, 2025 at the Elizabethtown DOT.

More information about rabies prevention is viewable on the ECHD website at:
<https://essexcountyny.gov/Health/communicable-disease-control/rabies-center/>

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