



November 19, 2025

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

For More Information:

Lindsay Java – Communications Specialist, Essex County Health Department
518-873-3517 | lindsay.java@essexcountyny.gov

Raccoon tests positive for rabies in Elizabethtown

Elizabethtown, NY. On Saturday, November 15, 2025, a local business in Elizabethtown observed a raccoon displaying strange behavior, consistent with signs of rabies. The animal was found deceased on the property the following day, Sunday, November 16, 2025. The business contacted the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), who dispatched an officer to retrieve the animal. The Essex County Health Department (ECHD) was notified when the deceased animal was taken to Adirondack Veterinary Hospital in Westport. ECHD coordinated with the veterinary office for preparation and shipment of the specimen to the NYSDOH's Wadsworth Laboratory.

On Wednesday, November 19, 2025, the lab confirmed the animal tested positive for rabies. The Health Department's investigation has confirmed there were no known human or pet exposures associated with this case. This is the ninth lab-confirmed case of rabies in Essex County this year—eight in terrestrial animals and one in a bat.

Cases have been reported in the following locations:

Elizabethtown: One skunk and one raccoon

Essex: One raccoon

Jay: One grey fox

Westport: One raccoon and one bat

Ticonderoga: One woodchuck and one raccoon

Willsboro: One skunk

"This late-season case reminds us that rabies is not just a summer issue; it is a year-round concern in Essex County," added Linda Beers, ECHD Public Health Director. "Please ensure your pets' rabies vaccinations are current, as this single step provides a vital shield against potential exposure, especially as wildlife movements change with the weather."

"As temperatures drop and wildlife seeks shelter, it's an important time for residents to make sure their properties don't inadvertently attract animals indoors, like securing garages, sheds, and accessible basements," said Jessica Darney Buehler, ECHD's Director of Health Planning and Promotion. "Rabies is almost always fatal once symptoms appear, which is why prevention through vaccination and avoiding contact with wild animals is so important."



Important Actions for Residents:

Do not approach or feed wild animals.

Ensure all dogs, cats, and ferrets are current on their rabies vaccinations.

Report any potential human or pet exposure to ECHD immediately.

Deer can contract rabies. Hunters should take proper precautions when handling any game animal that appears sick or is acting aggressively.

The Essex County Health Department's free rabies clinics have concluded for 2025. ECHD successfully vaccinated 713 pets across the county, marking a 22% increase from the 583 pets vaccinated during the 2024 clinics. Please stay tuned for the 2026 Rabies Clinic Schedule and registration information, which will be posted on the ECHD website. <https://essexcountyny.gov/Health/rabies-clinics/>

###