



HEALTH DEPARTMENT Public Health Unit

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Skunk in Elizabethtown Tests Positive for Rabies; No Exposures Reported

Elizabethtown, NY. A skunk found deceased in Elizabethtown has tested positive for rabies, the state testing lab confirmed Friday. While there were no reported exposures to people or pets, the Essex County Health Department (ECHD) decided to test the animal for surveillance after a report that it was acting strangely on a local business property. The Adirondack Veterinary Hospital prepared the skunk for shipment to the Wadsworth Laboratory.

The skunk was first seen behaving abnormally on Wednesday, July 30. The business owner found the animal deceased the next day and arranged for it to be tested. Results received on Friday, August 1, confirmed the presence of the virus.

This is the third positive case of rabies in 2025. Other positive cases were in a woodchuck in Ticonderoga and a raccoon in Westport.

"This positive case serves as a reminder for all Essex County residents to be vigilant and practice caution around wild animals," said Linda Beers, Director of Public Health for the ECHD. "The most effective way to protect your pets and family is to ensure all dogs, cats, and ferrets are up to date on their rabies vaccinations."

"Rabies bait distribution is part of the ongoing effort to reduce the spread of rabies in Essex County," said Jessica Darney Buehler, Director of Health Planning and Promotion for ECHD. "The USDA APHIS Wildlife Services conducted the first round of bait drops in early May, and the next is planned for August 6–9, focusing on the northeastern part of the county where many of the most recent cases have been reported. By using aircraft to distribute oral vaccine bait, the USDA is working to curb the virus in high-risk wildlife populations."

How to Protect Yourself and Your Family

Rabies is a viral disease of mammals that is almost always fatal once symptoms appear. To protect yourself and your family, residents are advised to:

Avoid contact with wild animals, especially those acting aggressively or unusually.



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Keep pets and livestock up to date on rabies vaccinations. This is the most important step in protecting them from the virus, and reducing the risk of spread to other animals or people.

Contact local animal control or the health department immediately if you see an animal acting strangely.

Do not feed or handle stray animals.

More information about rabies prevention can be viewed on the ECHD website at:

<https://essexcountyny.gov/Health/communicable-disease-control/rabies-center/>

To learn more about rabies bait drops—a program of the USDA APHIS Wildlife Services, go to:

<https://www.aphis.usda.gov/national-wildlife-programs/rabies>

The next free opportunity to vaccinate your pets is Tuesday, August 19th from 6-7:30 PM at the Lake Placid Horse Show Grounds.

To view the full 2025 Rabies Clinic Schedule and register your pets, go to

<https://essexcountyny.gov/Health/>.

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