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Northeastern Public Health Reports Confirmed Case of Rabies in an Arctic Fox from the James Bay Coast

Timmins, Ontario — Northeastern Public Health has been notified of a confirmed case of rabies in an arctic fox along the James Bay Coast. Prior to this case, the last animal that tested positive for rabies in the Northeastern Public Health region was a bat in 2021.

While the rabies virus is known to cycle in the arctic fox population in the north, there is an ever-present risk of rabies in wildlife, especially foxes. Knowing that surveillance information can be limited, the identification of this case may indicate an increase in the area.

“Often we forget that the rabies virus may be circulating in our wild animal populations, but there are several preventative measures we can take to protect ourselves, our families and our pets,” said Tanya Musgrave, Public Health Inspector at the Northeastern Public Health.

Rabies is a deadly disease caused by a virus that attacks the central nervous system (brain and spinal cord) of warm-blooded mammals such as raccoons, skunks, fox, coyotes, and bats. Once symptoms appear, rabies is almost always fatal. Rabies is also fatal to humans if it is not treated promptly.

Musgrave also adds, “To reduce the risk of infection, leave unfamiliar animals alone, supervise your pets and get them vaccinated. Also, talk to your children about the importance of staying away from stray animals and wildlife.”

If you are bitten or scratched by an animal, report the exposure to the Northeastern Public Health, by calling the 24-hour on-call service at 1-877-442-1212.

Vaccination is the best way to protect your pets against the rabies virus. For more information on Rabies and getting your pet vaccinated, visit phu.fyi/rabies.

1-877-442-1212



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