

MEDIA RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Fox that attacked Gilmer man tests positive for rabies *Roberts Ridge area residents urged to be on look out for stray dog*

Ellijay (GA) May 14, 2009 —Gilmer County Environmental Health officials announced today that a fox, which attacked a man at his Roberts Ridge Road home on May 8, has now tested positive for rabies.

“The man was attacked by the fox after he had seen it in his yard earlier that day,” according to Andrea Wheeler, Gilmer County Environmental Health Manager. “He was able to kill the fox during the attack, but the man did suffer some wounds to his hands and arms for which he was immediately treated at the hospital. The fox was shipped off to the state lab for testing on May 12, and the positive rabies results were delivered on May 13.”

Ms. Wheeler noted that, due to the aggressive behavior of the fox, the hospital began administering rabies post-exposure treatments to the injured man right away even though rabies exposure was not yet confirmed. The man was released from care and is recovering at home.

“There was also a stray dog in the area that had recently fought with this fox,” Ms Wheeler added. “So, if anyone has any information in regards to this dog along in the Roberts Ridge/Old Tails Creek area, please contact the environmental health office or Gilmer County Animal Control as soon as possible.”

No other information about the stray dog was available at the time of this release.

Just last week in Pickens County, another fox that had attacked two dogs was confirmed rabies positive.

Health officials urge people to maintain rabies vaccinations in all their pets and livestock

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and to avoid all unfamiliar animals. If a person or animal is bitten or scratched by a wild animal or by an unfamiliar domestic animal, the wound should be washed with soap and water and rinsed for several minutes. Seek medical attention, immediately, and report the event to the Gilmer County Environmental Health Department at 706-635-6050 with the following details:

- The geographic location of the incident
- The type of animal that was involved
- How the exposure occurred (provoked or unprovoked)
- The vaccination status of any pets involved
- Whether the aggressive animal can be safely captured and tested for rabies

For more information about rabies, call the Gilmer County Environmental Health Department or log onto the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) website at www.cdc.gov.

Persons who may be exposed to rabies may also call Georgia Poison Control at 1-800 - 222-1222 if other local resources cannot be reached.

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