



County of Inyo

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT

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PRESS RELEASE

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Inyo County HHS, Public Health would like to remind visitors and residents not to touch, handle, or feed wildlife. Five (5) bats in Inyo County have been secured and tested positive for rabies since April 2023.

On November 2, 2023, Inyo County Animal Control received a call about a bat behaving erratically in Bishop. The callers had the bat isolated, and no human contact was made with the bat. The bat was sent to the California Department of Public Health for testing by Inyo County Animal Control on November 7, 2023, and a positive result was received on November 9, 2023.

On November 9, 2023, Inyo County Environmental Health received a call about a potential bat exposure in Death Valley National Park. The report stated that an unidentified number of people were sleeping in either a tent or a camper and woke to find a deceased bat just outside the tent opening. The bat was sent to the California Department of Public Health for testing by Inyo County Animal Control on November 13, 2023, and a positive result was received on November 16, 2023.

Anyone who may have had contact with this bat should contact Inyo County Health Department for clinical guidance at 760-873-7868.

Rabies is usually fatal unless treated before symptoms begin. Humans can get rabies through contact with an infected animal's saliva, typically through a bite or scratch. Any mammal can carry rabies. People should be especially concerned when an animal is behaving aggressively or does not show a normal fear of humans. Bats typically hibernate or migrate from colder climates in the winter, but in warmer climates they may be active throughout the winter months. Please follow the guidance below to stay safe around wildlife.

How to stay safe around wildlife

- Never approach, touch, feed, or pick up a wild animal. Please enjoy wildlife from a safe distance.
- Do not approach if you see sick, dead, or erratically behaving wildlife.
- Humans and pets should avoid contact with bats. Make every effort to avoid a bat that is acting erratic during the daylight hours.
- Make your property unattractive to wild animals. Cap chimneys, screen windows, and seal off any openings in attics, under porches, and in basements.
- Make sure all pets are up to date with rabies vaccines.
- Consult with your doctor immediately in the event you have been in contact with an animal thought to be rabid.