

PRESS RELEASE 10-17-03
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: TIM O'CONNOR
561-355-3576 (355-3038 FAX)
KAREN BUCHAN,
ANIMAL CARE & CONTROL,
233-1280 FAX:233-1234

31st RABID ANIMAL DISCOVERED RABIES ALERT CONTINUES

Lantana, FL—The 31st rabid animal, a raccoon, was confirmed positive today. This latest case occurred near High Ridge Road and had no human exposure. The raccoon was observed falling down and viciously attacking itself when captured. The rabies alert area includes all coastal regions with an eastern boundary of the Atlantic Ocean, and a western boundary along US 441 from Boca Raton to Lantana and west again to Flying Cow Road where the line goes north to Martin County.

The alert is the result of 31 rabid animal confirmations, mostly raccoons, this year. This latest incident represents the largest number of animal rabies since 1953. A total of 13 persons have come in contact with these animals and have had to take a series of rabies shots as a precaution.

Animal Care and Control can be reached at 561-233-1200 if abnormal raccoon or fox behavior is observed. If a person is bitten they should report to the nearest hospital for treatment and call the Palm Beach County Health Department at 561-840-4500.

Rabies is a deadly viral disease that can be prevented but not cured. The virus attacks the nerves and brain tissue of warm-blooded animals including people.

Domestic animals, dogs and cats, over four months of age are required to be vaccinated against rabies and wear a current rabies license tag. Rabies shots are also available through a veterinarian or by calling Animal Care and Control at 561 233-1272.

-30-