



# TOWN OF TRURO

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## PRESS RELEASE

### *Health Advisory – Bat Tests Positive for Rabies in Truro*

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:** August 11, 2023 – The Town of Truro was notified of a positive rabies test conducted on a dead bat found in South Truro.

Rabies is a serious viral disease that affects the brain and spinal cord of mammals and can spread from an infected animal to a person. The virus is transmitted via direct contact with saliva (most commonly through a bite or scratch but can also enter broken skin or mucous membranes in the eyes, nose, or mouth) or brain/nervous system tissue from an infected animal. In people, the disease can be prevented by getting appropriately vaccinated after an exposure; otherwise, the disease is fatal. Animals that most commonly carry rabies in Massachusetts are raccoons, skunks, and bats.

According to the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH), the most recent human cases of rabies in the U.S. have been caused by bats. Any possible contact with bats or other wildlife should be taken seriously and potential exposures should be carefully evaluated. This includes a bite or scratch, waking up with a bat in the room, or finding a bat in a room with a young child or impaired person. Bat teeth are very small, and a person may not realize they have been bitten.

#### ***The Truro Health Department would like the public to be aware of the following:***

- Do not feed or interact with feral cats or other wild animals.
- Domestic animals with wounds of unknown origin must be treated as possibly having been exposed to rabies.
- Be especially careful not to pick up a bat or take a bat from a pet's mouth with your bare hands.
- All animal bites or other direct exposure from wildlife to a person should be assessed for risk of potential rabies transmission.
- If a resident believes they have been exposed to a wild animal, please contact our local Animal Control Officer through the Truro Police Department at (508) 487-8730.
- Animal bites by wildlife should be reported to the 24/7 Epidemiology Line (617) 983-6800 for risk assessment and coordination of the animal for rabies testing at the Massachusetts State Public Health Laboratory (MASPHL).
- Animal bites by a domestic animal (dog, cat, ferret, or livestock) should be reported to the Animal Control Officer through the Truro Police Department at (508) 487-8730.
- Additional resources are available at [www.mass.gov/rabies](http://www.mass.gov/rabies).

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