

# Rabid skunks in El Dorado County increasing

More rabid skunks have turned up in El Dorado County. The number is at seven.

“While it isn’t unusual to find animals that test positive for rabies in California, the reporting seems early and the activity higher compared to previous years for our county. We aren’t sure if more skunks are active due to the dry winter or we are simply seeing increased reporting by the public,” Alicia Paris-Pombo, El Dorado County health officer, said in a statement.

Since the beginning of the year, two rabid skunks were found in Pollock Pines, one in Shingle Springs, three in Garden Valley and one in the Pleasant Valley area. Animal Services is not aware of any human contact with any of the skunks.

Rabies activity has varied from year to year in El Dorado County. Confirmed reports of rabid animals have included:

- 2013, one bat and one skunk
- 2012, one bat and five skunks
- 2011, three bats and three skunks
- 2010, two bats and five skunks
- 2009, two bats, two skunks and two foxes.

Historically, most of the rabid animals have been on the West Slope, with smaller numbers reported in the South Lake Tahoe area.

The following precautions should be taken to prevent the spread of rabies:

- Maintain current rabies vaccinations for dogs, cats and livestock
- Keep property free of garbage, stored bird seed and left

over pet food to avoid attracting wild animals; keep pet doors closed at night to avoid entry of wild animals into the home

- Do not approach, pick up, feed or handle unfamiliar dogs, cats or wild animals
- Do not approach an animal that appears to be sick or is acting aggressively; report it to Animal Services
- Do not handle a dead animal with bare hands
- Call Animal Services if you see an animal that exhibits signs of rabies (such as staggering, confusion and/or aggressive behavior)
- Notify Animal Services immediately of any person or domestic pet that is bitten or potentially exposed to a rabid or suspected rabid animal
- Report any exposure to bats; bats are one of the most frequent carriers of rabies in California.

Animal Services staff may be reached at 530.573.7925.