

Skunk Rabies Spreading in Colorado

The following is an email from Drs. John Maulsby and Keith Roehr from the CO State Veterinarian's Office and John Pape, Colorado Department of Public and Environment to all Colorado Veterinarians. It is provided here for your info.

Dear Colorado Practitioners:

We want to inform you of issues surrounding the apparent return of terrestrial rabies in eastern Colorado and make recommendations in the management of rabies. When rabies is being endemically transmitted in a terrestrial host, the risk of spillover infections in domestic pets and livestock increases significantly.

During 2007, three Colorado counties, Las Animas, Prowers, and Washington had terrestrial animals diagnosed with rabies. In 2008, Adams, Kit Carson, Yuma, and Arapahoe counties have had skunk rabies reported. The most recent rabid skunk was found in Kiowa County. This data suggests that skunk rabies is circulating throughout most of eastern Colorado and is moving westward toward the Front Range.

To determine the distribution of skunk rabies, CDPHE, the State Veterinarian's Office and the Division of Wildlife have established a skunk rabies surveillance project. Details of this project are attached. Veterinarians are encouraged to report any suspect rabid skunks or other animals to their local public health agency.

Because the presence of rabies circulating in a local skunk population increases the risk of rabies exposures to other animals, and subsequently people exposed to those animals, the following recommendations are provided to reduce the risk of rabies exposure:

Domestic Animals:

1. Companion animals should be currently vaccinated with an approved rabies vaccine according to the guidelines outlined in the Compendium of Animal Rabies Prevention and Control, 2008. Colorado law requires rabies vaccinations to be administered by a licensed veterinarian. Owner administered vaccine will not be recognized by the public health department if the animal has been exposed to rabies.
2. Veterinarians, in conjunction with local public health agencies, may want to consider holding community rabies vaccination clinics to educate the public on rabies prevention and insure domestic pets are currently immunized.
3. Dogs and cats involved in a human bite must reported to animal control or public health and be held in a 10-day quarantine or submitted for rabies testing.
4. Pets and livestock exposed to potentially rabid skunks must be reported to animal control or local public health. The 10-day quarantine does NOT apply to these situations. The management of exposed pets depends on the circumstances of the exposure and rabies vaccination status of the animal. This protocol can be viewed at: http://www.cdphe.state.co.us/dc/Zoonosis/rabies/Exposed_pets.pdf.
5. Veterinarians should discuss vaccinating livestock against rabies with clients. In particular, vaccination should be considered for equines, seed stock, and dairy cattle or other high value stock. Owners can vaccinate their livestock under the direction of their veterinarian, although, again, owner administered vaccination would not be recognized by public health authorities in exposure situations.

Biosafety for Veterinary Personnel and Persons Handling Suspected Rabid Animals:

1. Veterinarians should consider rabies in their differential diagnosis whenever they are examining an animal with a rapidly progressive neurological presentation.
2. Persons having contact with a suspect animal should be minimized and limited to, if possible, staff that have had pre-exposure rabies immunization.
3. Clinic staff should review and follow biosafety protocols. Suspect animals should be isolated to prevent any direct contact with other clinic patients, staff, and the public. Respiratory isolation is not necessary.
4. Use appropriate protective clothing and equipment to avoid getting animal fluids onto your clothing, eyes, nose or mouth. At a minimum, this means impervious latex or rubber gloves while examining an animal. If handling a suspected rabid animal carcass or removing a head, a face shield, rubber gloves, and coveralls are recommended.
5. Clean personal protective equipment, knives, coolers, and other contaminated items with hot, soapy water or an alcohol or bleach sanitizer. Wash contaminated clothing in a regular hot wash/dryer cycle. Contaminated surfaces can be cleaned with 1:10 bleach/water solution. WASH hands with a sanitizer.
6. Pre-exposure rabies prophylaxis should be considered for any staff, such as veterinary technicians, that might have direct animal contact. It would not be indicated for administrative staff or persons with indirect animal contact. However, currently there is a national shortage of human rabies vaccine due to manufacturing problems. Sanofi Pasteur, maker of IMOVAX rabies vaccine and Novartis, maker of RabAvert, are currently only releasing vaccine for postexposure prophylaxis. Veterinarians can identify staff that would be eligible for vaccination or in need of a booster dose in anticipation of additional supplies being available to the market by July 2008.

MRSA and MRSA are transmittable to dogs!!

A warning: If you hadn't already heard, pets are now becoming victims of MRSA and MRSA. There isn't much info specifically about pets, but two articles can be found at <http://www.petconnection.com/blog/2008/03/03/superbug-bites-dog/> and <http://www.vdh.state.va.us/epidemiology/DEE/otherzoonosis/documents/MRSA/mrsa%20and%20animals%20fact%20sheet.pdf>. Please be aware that MRSA can be spread from human to pet and vice versa and handle any wound with extra precaution. Immediate veterinary help should be sought if small wounds quickly worsen. Both humans and pets can act as carriers without showing signs of disease themselves.

FDA Announces Limited Return of Heartworm Drug

(A special note from Beth about this product – “I think we need to share this. Proheart 6 killed thousands of dogs because if their body reacted to the drug there was no way to stop further releases. I wouldn't trust this second brand at all either. If a person can't remember once a month to treat the dog then they shouldn't own a dog. IMHO”)

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) today announced a limited return of a reformulated heartworm prevention drug for dogs, which had been withdrawn because of serious, life-threatening adverse reactions, including loss of appetite, lethargy; vomiting, seizures, difficulty walking, jaundice (a yellowish appearance); and bleeding disorders, allergies, convulsions, followed in some cases by death.

To view this press release in it's entirety, click this link: <http://www.fda.gov/bbs/topics/NEWS/2008/NEW01844.html>

Summer's Here - Are You And Your Dog Ready?

Just like people, dogs are subject to heat exhaustion and heat stroke. The following recommendations come from Dr. Nate Baxter, Lebanon, Ohio who in addition to his Veterinary Practice also works with Labradors and does the hunting/training circuits with them, but the information applies to any dog that has exerted itself on a hot or humid day.

Obviously the best way to handle heat exhaustion and heat stroke is to prevent it in the first place and know your dog – watch for changes in behavior, panting, breathing and how they react to different temperatures and humidity levels especially if traveling to the south in the summer months. One of the best suggestions is to leave your dog at home instead of in the car while you go to the grocery store, or run other errands around town. They would much rather be home in the comfort of the air conditioning alone than to be stuck in a car that can and WILL quickly overheat even with the windows 'cracked'.

Dogs do not lose enough electrolytes thru exercise to make a difference, but if the dog gets truly into heat stroke the physiology changes will make them necessary. BUT oral replacement at that point is futile, they need IV and lots of it.

Cooling: The point of evaporative cooling being the most efficient is correct. However, in a muggy environment, that will not help as much, so I do cool with the coldest water I can find and will use ice depending on the situation. The best way is to run water over the dog, so there is always fresh water in contact. When you immerse a dog in a tub, the water trapped in the hair coat will get warm next to the dog, and act as an insulator against the cool water and cooling stops. If you can run water over the dog and place it in front of a fan that is the best. Misting the dog with water will only help if you are in a dry environment or in front of a fan. Just getting the dog wet is not the point, you want the water to be cool itself, or to evaporate.

For MOST situations all you will need to do is get the dog in a cooler environment, like the shade, or in the car with the air conditioning on. The dogs can get too hot in the back of a pickup with a cap. One idea is to build a platform to put the wire crates on, this raises the dog up in the truck box where air flow better. Additionally, place a 3 speed box fan in front and blowing on the dogs with a foot of space to allow better airflow. A relatively inexpensive power inverter connected to the battery allows the fan to run from the truck's power. On medium the airflow should keep the dogs breathing normally and comfortable even on very hot muggy days.

Alcohol: Is very effective at cooling due to the rapid evaporation. It should be used when other methods are not working, but do not hesitate to use it. Due to the thicker skin and rapid evaporation do not worry about it being absorbed. Use rubbing alcohol, which is propylene alcohol, not ethyl, for those of you not aware. So do not try to drink it.

Watching temp: If you feel your dog is in danger of heat injury, check its temp and write it down. Keep checking the temp every 3 minutes. Don't forget to shake it down completely each time, sounds silly, but when are worried about your companion, things tend to get mixed up. This is VERY IMPORTANT=>once the temp STARTS to drop, STOP ALL COOLING EFFORTS. The cooling process will continue even though you have stopped. If the temp starts at 106.5, and then next time it drops to 105.8, stop cooling the dog, dry it off, and continue monitoring. You will be amazed how it continues to go down. If you do not stop until the temp is 102, the temp will drop on down to 99 or even lower. I cannot emphasize that point enough. When the dog is so heated that it is panting severely, only let it have a few laps of water, you just need to keep the mouth wet so the panting is more effective. Do not worry about hydration until the temp has started down. A dog panting heavily taking in large amounts of water is a risk of bloat. Once the temp is going down and panting has slowed to more normal panting then allow water. The dog will rehydrate it self after temp is normal. If the dog has a serious problem and even though you have gotten the temp normal, get the dog to a vet, as it can still need IV fluids and some medication. Also, a case of heat stroke can induce a case of hemorrhagic gastroenteritis (not parvo), with a ton of very bloody diarrhea and a lot of fluid and electrolyte loss. These cases need aggressive treatment.



Fido & Fireworks...



With July 4th right around the corner, we just wanted to remind you to be very mindful of your dogs. Fireworks and all the noise and light that come with them can be very unnerving to a dog whose sensitive ears will pick up the high pitched whistles and the thunderous explosions. Many dogs are frightened of the sights and sounds that we 'ooh and ahh' over as we celebrate our independence. Dogs have been known to burst through plate glass windows and doors, over fences and gates, etc., in fear of the noise. If you must leave your dogs alone, close the drapes, turn on the television or soothing music, and give them a natural sedative or an antihistamine to make them groggy well ahead of the start of the fireworks. There are many natural calming products on the market, do an internet search (using GoodSearch.com, of course) for natural sedatives and you'll find plenty of information about them. Most Veterinarians recommend keeping 'storm phobic' dogs or dogs with 'Fourth Fear' on the natural sedatives throughout the entire storm/Fourth season. These are usually added to their food. You can also lessen the noise with cotton in their ears – just don't forget to remove it afterward. If the dog is crate trained, go ahead and crate him during the fireworks. Just because your dog was fine last year is not a guarantee that she will be this year, too. Just like people, they develop sensitivities with age... so watch you dog closely for any signs that she is becoming distressed. If she shows signs of distress, get her to a quiet area and calm her down. Make sure that your dog has current ID tags on his collar, just in case! Double check the yard along the fence and gates for holes, and make sure the gates have locks on them. Prepare for the worst, expect the best! These tips will help make the 4th of July celebration go by without traumatizing your pup. And remember to have a **HAPPY INDEPENDENCE DAY!!!!!!!!!!!!!!**

If The Unthinkable Happens

We give a lot of thought to what happens if we die or are no longer able to fend for ourselves... but have you thought about what happens to your beloved Dal should the unthinkable occur? In rescue, we hear all too often about the dog that ended up in the shelter because the owner died and no one stepped up to care for the dog.

First, let those who are closest to you know what your wishes are. A provision in your last will and testament lets everyone know what your wishes are. Animals are not allowed to own property or bank accounts in our country. A will is a legal document that transfers property. And once that transfer is completed there is no ongoing supervision. So you will need to take even more care in designating a caregiver via a will.

Safer yet is a pet trust. A legal document – recognized in 39 states (Colorado is one of them) and the District of Columbia – outlines the continued care and maintenance of your dog and names new caregivers or directs trustees to find new homes for your dogs. A trustee has a legal duty to carry out your wishes, unlike a caregiver designated by a will. Another benefit of a pet trust over a will is that a will is only valid when you die and can take a long time to be executed or even worse it can be contested and held up in probate for extremely lengthy periods of time whereas a trust can be set up to be effective immediately which is especially important in the case of incapacity.

Creating a pet trust does take time and can cost a bit of money. Most people seek out a lawyer or estate planner who is versed in writing trusts and expect to pay them upwards of \$500 or more to have one written. Should you make the payment of monies a lump sum payment or monthly payment? Well, that depends... on numerous factors. Each person and situation is different. Some people have written their trusts so that the caregiver doesn't realize there is a financial plan until the dog has been with them for a specified time and then they get a lump sum to cover expenses to that point and then a monthly or annual stipend from that point on. There are probably as many ways to structure the payment as there are people who plan for their dog's care. If you want to really ensure that the monies are used for the dog, you might also consider naming someone other than the caregiver to act as the trustee and handle the money. This reduces the risk that someone will get the money and selling or otherwise getting rid of the dog.

If you are more the "Do It Yourself" type, you can visit Peace Of Mind Pet Trust on the internet (<http://www.pompt.net>) and order their simple forms (\$89.00) to create your pet trust according to the laws of the state in which you live. If you don't live in one of the 39 statutory law states, they will send forms for creating a traditional living trust which works the same.

Just as you would when selecting a guardian for your children, you should talk to perspective caregivers for your dog. Find someone you believe will you can trust and will have your dog's best interests at heart. The bottom line in selecting your caregivers and trustees is to make sure that whomever you select will love your dog as much as you do.

******* FOSTER HOMES DESPERATELY NEEDED *******

PLEASE, we need YOUR help!! Remember when your rescue Dalmatian came home with you, from the warmth of a loving foster family? If we hadn't had foster homes you probably would not have gotten your dog. PLEASE think about fostering a dog for Rescue so we can save lives like we saved your dog's life!! PLEASE give a warm home to a dog that can relax, show his true personality, enjoy a thick bed rather than a concrete floor in a shelter and be ready for a new home. PLEASE help us and the dogs so that others might have a dog that is well socialized, trained, and ready to love. PLEASE think about this.... Dalmatians are everywhere and are literally dying to meet you or someone willing to give them a "spot" to be until their forever home comes along. PLEASE be a spot for us... and for them?

We thank you and you know any dog you help us save will be eternally grateful! PLEASE submit a foster application if you can possibly help us and them! PLEASE take your cookie... good boy/girl!

Bits & Pieces

Gas Price Woes??



My dog is worried about the economy because Alpo is up to \$3.00 a can. That's almost \$21.00 in dog money.

-Joe Weinstein

Summer Fun!



Pictured above is Tom and his deaf Dal, Helen Keller, enjoying a day on the water!

Our 14 year old dog, Abbey, died last month. The day after she died, my 4 year old daughter Meredith was crying and talking about how much she missed Abbey. She asked if we could write a letter to God so that when Abbey got to heaven, God would recognize her. I told her that I thought we could so she dictated these words:

Dear God,

Will you please take care of my dog? She died yesterday and is with you in heaven. I miss her very much. I am happy that you let me have her as my dog even though she got sick.

I hope you will play with her. She likes to play with balls and to swim. I am sending a picture of her so when you see her. You will know that she is my dog. I really miss her.

Love, Meredith.

We put the letter in an envelope with a picture of Abbey and Meredith, and addressed it to God/Heaven. We put our return address on it. Then Meredith pasted several stamps on the front of the envelope because she said it would take lots of stamps to get the letter all the way to heaven. That afternoon she dropped it into the letter box at the post office. A few days later, she asked if God had gotten the letter yet. I told her that I thought He had.

Yesterday, there was a package wrapped in gold paper on our front porch addressed, 'To Meredith' ...in an unfamiliar hand writing. Meredith opened it. Inside was a book by Mr. Rogers called, 'When a Pet Dies'. Taped to the inside front cover was the letter we had written to God in its opened envelope. On the opposite page was the picture of Abbey & Meredith and this note:

Dear Meredith,

Abbey arrived safely in heaven. Having the picture was a big help. I recognized Abbey right away. Abbey isn't sick anymore. Her spirit is here with me just like it stays in your heart. Abbey loved being your dog. Since we don't need our bodies in heaven, I don't have any pockets to keep your picture in, so I am sending it back to you in this little book for you to keep and have something to remember Abbey by.

Thank you for the beautiful letter and thank your mother for helping you write it and sending it to me. What a wonderful mother you have. I picked her especially for you.

I send my blessings every day and remember that I love you very much.

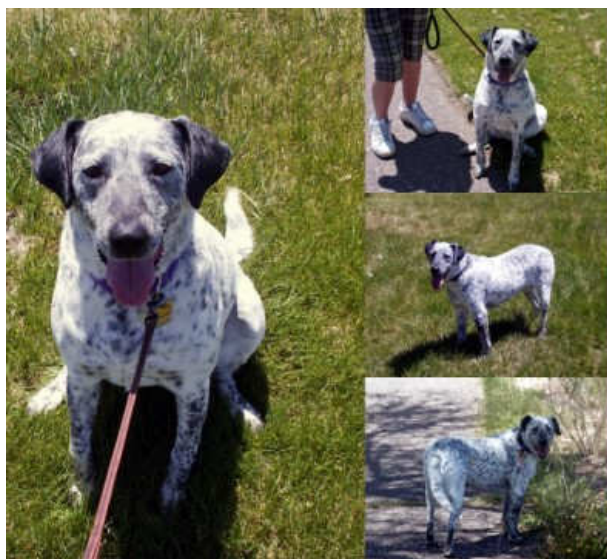
By the way, I'm easy to find, I am wherever there is love.

Love, God



In The Doghouse... Our Featured Dalmatian

Pansyl



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2 Years Old, Black Spayed Female, Dal Mix Stray

URGENT!!

Pansy needs a home now! Pansy has been living in a day care situation, learning to get along with other dogs and she is doing so well, but it is now time for her to have her own home. She is very friendly and LOVES belly rubs, walks in the park, and just sitting and discussing politics. She is an active girl and needs good exercise and would make a good jogging or biking partner. Pansy is good in the house and is housebroken. We think Pansy is probably part heeler from the way she plays but that is a guess. Do you have room for a pretty flower like Pansy?

Happy Beginnings Story

Pepper (aka FreedomA)

Back in January, I came to accept that it was about time to euthanize my 18 year old Dalmatian, Backdraft, due to failing health. I had her since she was a puppy, and I knew I couldn't do it without having a replacement for her. I contacted Dalmatian Rescue of Colorado and agreed to adopt a heavily spotted dog named Freedom. I drove to Wheatland, WY to meet the foster parents and pick up Freedom. When Freedom first got out of the car, I immediately noticed that she was much cuter than her online picture indicated.

I opened my car door to get a harness, and she immediately jumped into my car. Since both the foster parents and I had long drives ahead of us we took off. Freedom acted as if she knew what her fate held. She just curled up on the back seat and went to sleep for the whole trip. This was great because I hit a ground blizzard on the way back to Montana, and not having a nervous dog was great.

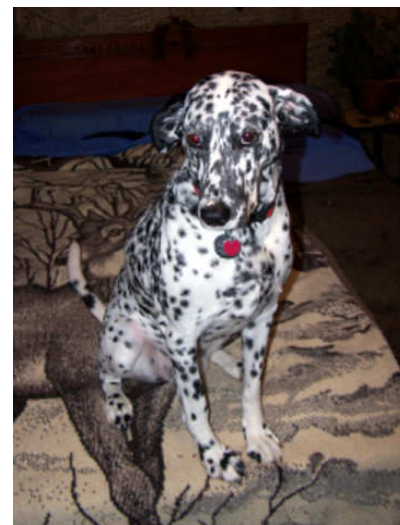
Because of the weather, we had to stay in a motel in Gillette. While we were there, I renamed her Pepper, because of all the spots she has. I didn't even realize what I'd done...I now have two dogs, Doc and Pepper (Doctor Pepper). HA HA.

We had some great bonding time, and Pepper slept next to me on the bed that night. Once we got home the next day, Pepper met Doc. He grumped a bit at her, but just like when she got into the car, she settled in nicely.

Since then, she has bonded completely. What I like most about Pepper is her easy going attitude. In fact when I first got her I couldn't believe she was a Dalmatian because she is so mellow. When we play, she has the cutest growl that is more like a cat purring. She's definitely a smart dog too. When we watch tv together, she immediately jumps down when I shut the stereo down. She hears the "click" and she's ready for bed.

Now just a few months later, she has settled into the house as if she lived here for years.

Thank you Dalmatian Rescue!



Please don't forget... if you haven't sent in your Happy Beginnings Story yet, why not do it right now while it's fresh in your mind! It's never too late to see your story in print!!

NewSpots is published and released on the first calendar day of the month. The deadline for submissions for future issues of NewSpots will be the 25th of the previous month. Submissions received after the deadline may be delayed in publication until the following month, subject to the Editor's discretion.

Dalmatian Rescue of Colorado, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) Non-profit organization. Donations are tax deductible!!
6828 Rim Rock Trail, Fort Collins, CO 80526 **Rescue Hotline: 303-281-8963** Fax: 970-377-9509

<http://www.dalmatianrescue.org>