

## Two People Exposed to Rabies by 'Indoor' Cat

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DALTON, GA (WRCB) - Two Whitfield County residents are now undergoing rabies treatments after exposure to a pet cat that the Georgia Public Health Laboratory has now confirmed as positive for rabies.

The 15-year old cat bit its owner and exposed the owner's fiancée to the disease before it died. A test for rabies came back positive October 26, 2012.

The cat was reported to have had rabies vaccinations in the past but was not current with its vaccinations.

Due to the age of the animal and being kept indoors, the expected probability of rabies was considered small. The cat's owner could not remember an incident when the cat may have been exposed to rabies.

Public health officials have gone on a door-to-door campaign in Dalton delivering rabies notices, since the area is well-populated.

Domestic dogs and cats typically become rabid within one to three months from exposure, longer incubation periods have been documented. In some cases, humans have not developed rabies until several years after exposure.

Rabies is usually transmitted by exposure to the saliva of a rabid animal through a bite or scratch. Wild carnivores such as bats, raccoons, skunks, coyotes, bobcats and foxes serve as a reservoir for the disease virus and these wild animals can transmit it to domestic dogs, cats, livestock and people.

Bats are considered to be one of the primary conduits for rabies transmission to humans. Contact with bats should be avoided.

For questions on rabies, contact your local county environmental health office or visit the [CDC website](#). **Story courtesy AVMA**

## ISVMA Monthly Legislative Report

In an effort to keep ISVMA members more aware of Illinois politics and legislative and regulatory actions that impact their practices, ISVMA publishes a monthly legislative report. Please read the [November Legislative Report](#).

## Volunteers Needed at 2013 AVMA Convention to be Part of History

The 2013 AVMA Annual Convention will be July 19-23 at McCormick Place in Chicago. This is your chance to help veterinarians in Illinois, as the host State, make this 150th AVMA Convention the best ever. As chair of the Convention Task Force for the ISVMA, I am seeking volunteers to help in welcoming attendees to our wonderful State of Illinois and City of Chicago. There are many opportunities for you which include moderators, hosts, registration assistance, information greeters, etc. For 10 hours of volunteer work or 8 hours of being a moderator your registration will be rebated. Now is the time to raise your hand and offer your help. Please email me ([petsvet3134@gmail.com](mailto:petsvet3134@gmail.com)) your contact information if you are interested in joining your colleagues celebrate the 150th Anniversary of the AVMA.

## Become a Key ISVMA Legislative Contact!

While nearly all of the attention regarding next Tuesday's election is focused on the presidential race, there are many local, state and federal officials that will also be on the ballot. To members of

the ISVMA, the candidates for Illinois State Representative and Illinois State Senate are the key decision-makers regarding laws and regulations that impact the veterinary profession.

This is the first year that state legislators will be elected under new legislative district maps. As a result, there will be significant turnover in the makeup of the Illinois House of Representatives and Illinois State Senate. We need your help in getting to know the new legislature!

If you know or have a relationship with an Illinois State Representative, Illinois State Senator or candidate for one of those offices, please take a minute and fill out the [ISVMA Legislative Relationship Form](#).

Your client, friend, neighbor, relative, fellow Rotary Club member, etc. may be the key legislator on an important vote in 2013! Please remember, the Illinois Veterinary Medicine and Surgery Practice Act is up for renewal in 2013 and this is a critical year for ISVMA members to participate in grassroots advocacy.

### **Human-To-Pet Transmission A Concern At The Onset Of Flu Season**

(Medical News Today) As flu season approaches, people who get sick may not realize they can pass the flu not only to other humans, but possibly to other animals, including pets such as cats, dogs and ferrets.

This concept, called "reverse zoonosis," is still poorly understood but has raised concern among some scientists and veterinarians, who want to raise awareness and prevent further flu transmission to pets. About 80-100 million households in the United States have a cat or dog.

It's well known that new strains of influenza can evolve from animal populations such as pigs and birds and ultimately move into human populations, including the most recent influenza pandemic strain, H1N1. It's less appreciated, experts say, that humans appear to have passed the H1N1 flu to cats and other animals, some of which have died of respiratory illness.

There are only a handful of known cases of this phenomenon and the public health implications of reverse zoonosis of flu remain to be determined. But as a concern for veterinarians, it has raised troubling questions and so far, few answers.

Veterinary researchers at Oregon State University and Iowa State University are working to find more cases of this type of disease transmission and better understand any risks they pose to people and pets.

"We worry a lot about zoonoses, the transmission of diseases from animals to people," said Christiane Loehr, an associate professor in the OSU College of Veterinary Medicine. "But most people don't realize that humans can also pass diseases to animals, and this raises questions and concerns about mutations, new viral forms and evolving diseases that may potentially be zoonotic. And, of course, there is concern about the health of the animals."

The researchers are surveying flu transmission to household cat and dog populations, and suggest that people with influenza-like illness distance themselves from their pets. If a pet experiences respiratory disease or other illness following household exposure to someone with the influenza-like illness, the scientists encourage them to take the pet to a veterinarian for testing and treatment.

The first recorded, probable case of fatal human-to-cat transmission of the pandemic H1N1 flu virus occurred in Oregon in 2009, Loehr said. Details were published in *Veterinary Pathology*, a professional journal. In that instance, a pet owner became severely ill with the flu and had to be hospitalized. While she was still in the hospital, her cat - an indoor cat with no exposure to other sick people, homes or wildlife - also died of pneumonia caused by an H1N1 infection.

Since then, researchers have identified a total of 13 cats and one dog with pandemic H1N1 infection

in 2011 and 2012 that appeared to have come from humans. Pet ferrets have also been shown to be infected, and some died. All of the animals' symptoms were similar to that of humans - they rapidly develop severe respiratory disease, stop eating and some die. Serological studies suggest there is far more exposure to flu virus in cats and dogs than previously known.

"It's reasonable to assume there are many more cases of this than we know about, and we want to learn more," Loehr said. "Any time you have infection of a virus into a new species, it's a concern, a black box of uncertainty. We don't know for sure what the implications might be, but we do think this deserves more attention."

Natural and experimental transmission of the H3N2 influenza virus from dogs to cats in South Korea showed the potential for flu viruses to be transmitted among various animal species, Loehr said. It's unknown if an infected cat or other pet could pass influenza back to humans.

The primary concern in "reverse zoonosis," as in evolving flu viruses in more traditional hosts such as birds and swine, is that in any new movement of a virus from one species to another, the virus might mutate into a more virulent, harmful or easily transmissible form.

"All viruses can mutate, but the influenza virus raises special concern because it can change whole segments of its viral sequence fairly easily," Loehr said. "In terms of hosts and mutations, who's to say that the cat couldn't be the new pig? We'd just like to know more about this."

Veterinarians who encounter possible cases of this phenomenon can obtain more information from Loehr or Jessie Trujillo at Iowa State University. They are doing ongoing research to predict, prevent or curtail emergent events.

### About the Photo

A resident of islands and coastlines in the Caribbean, the [White-crowned Pigeon](#) (*Patagioenas leucocephala*) reaches the northern limits of its range in south Florida. It feeds almost entirely on fruits of hardwood trees.

Sometimes referred to as the Maserati of birds this pigeon is not the typical city pigeon (Rock Dove). The White-crowned Pigeon is one of the FASTEST birds... no joke. The ground speed of the White-crowned Pigeon in flight has not been formally documented, but is said to easily outpace a fast motorboat.

This species nests in coastal and island forests, including mangroves, and feeds in forests with a wide variety of fruit-bearing trees. In South Florida, the food the need is on Key West, but their habitat is on near shore islands.

The White-crowned Pigeon nests and forages in two distinct habitats: islands and forests supporting fruiting trees. Daily flights between the two habitats are sometimes longer than 30 miles.

After many hours of searching for this species in Key West and the Everglades, I was finally able to photograph the bird in a residential neighborhood in Kendall, Florida.

### Contact Us

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