



February 17, 2022
For Immediate Release

Rabies outbreak in foxes being closely monitored

Conservation Officers and Public Health staff with the Nunatsiavut Government continue to work closely with officials from the provincial Department of Fisheries, Forestry and Agriculture and Labrador-Grenfell Regional Health Authority in dealing with a recent outbreak of rabies in northern Labrador.

There have been three positive cases of rabies confirmed in foxes in the Nain area, and one in Hopedale. Officials are waiting for results of tests conducted on four other foxes in Nain and two in Hopedale.

Residents of all Labrador Inuit communities are encouraged to watch for signs of the virus and to report any suspicious activity exhibited by foxes or other wild animals to Nunatsiavut Government conservation officers. Any suspicious activity noticed in pets should be reported to respective Inuit community governments.

The symptoms of rabies include changes in behaviour, such as from friendly to aggressive or from cautious to fearless. A dog that had a good temper may start acting mean; while a fox that would normally not be seen in a community during the daytime might be seen running around between houses and fighting with dogs.

Animals with rabies may start biting and chewing more. This could include biting at people and other animals, or biting and chewing at snowmobiles, wood, stones, buildings, etc., sometimes to the point that they break their teeth. The animals may also bite themselves, usually at the site of the original wound. Another possible sign is the presence of porcupine quills in the animal's face. Animals normally wary of porcupines may approach them when rabid.

Rabid animals may also be observed staggering, drooling, have a change in voice or paralysis of part of the body (such as a hind leg).

Residents of all communities should refrain from approaching or petting wild animals.

Rabies vaccination for domestic animals are available free of charge and can be arranged by contacting your local public health office (clinics are being held and are ongoing).

Public health is encouraging residents to have their domestic pets immunized.