

N. Wildlife/Stray Animals on Campus

Palm Beach State College Campuses are home to wildlife species. Some of the more common species are: raccoons, opossums, fox, squirrels, bats, snakes, iguanas, alligators, skunks and many birds.

Palm Beach State College Campuses also may have stray animals, i.e., cats and dogs.

- **Wildlife on Campus is protected, and all students, staff and visitors are asked to not harass them in any way. Do not feed wild animals.**

- **Stray animals (dogs and cats) need to be reported to the Campus Facilities Department who will notify Animal Control. Do not feed stray animals.**

While an effort is made to protect wildlife on our Campus, personal contact with wildlife or stray animals can pose a health risk. Never feed, touch or try to pick up any animals.

Stray Animals - Feral Cats & Dogs

Feral cats and dogs are stray and wild (i.e., not domesticated) animals that survive on their own by eating whatever they can catch -- rats, mice, moles and even sick bats. Feral cats and dogs have not been spayed or neutered and multiply rapidly. These animals have not been vaccinated and may be infected with rabies.

Wild Animals (*raccoons, squirrels, etc.*)

Raccoons feed out of dumpsters and also on food left out for feral cats. Rabies is an infectious viral disease that affects the nervous system of humans and other mammals. People get rabies from the bite of an animal with rabies (a rabid animal) and any wild animal (mammals) can have rabies and transmit it to people.

Signs of rabies in animals include:

- Changes in an animal's behavior
- General sickness
- Problems swallowing
- An increase in drool or saliva
- Wild animals that appear abnormally tame or sick
- Animals that may bite at everything if excited
- Difficulty moving or paralysis

If you are bitten by an animal, you should:

- Immediately wash the wound with soap and water for at least 15 minutes to try and rinse away the animal's saliva.

- **Seek medical attention immediately.** All animal bites, regardless of the species or the severity, should be examined by a physician.
- Call 911 if bite is severe.
- Report animal bites to Epidemiology at the Palm Beach County Health Department (561-671-4184).
- Try to remember what the animal looks like, so it can be caught and tested for rabies.
- If the animal is wild, or a stray, call Rabies Control immediately so they can trap the animal.
- Notify Security of incident.

DO NOT

- Try to trap the biting animal yourself.
- Try to kill the animal.
- Approach any wild animal.
- Feed any wild animals.
- Attempt to take action yourself.
- If the animal is someone's pet, you should still call Rabies Control. They will speak to the animal's owner and make sure the animal does not have rabies.
- If the animal is dead - **DO NOT TOUCH IT.**

If the biting animal tests positive for rabies (or if the biting animal can't be found), you will need to get the rabies vaccine (medicine) as soon as possible. DON'T WORRY; it's not twenty shots in the stomach anymore. Today, the rabies vaccine has only 5-7 shots in the arm and the butt. The shots are spread out on different days, and they help your body fight the rabies virus, so you don't catch the disease. If you get the shots started in time (usually within 7 - 10 days), you shouldn't catch the virus at all. Your body fights it off. Without the treatment, a person bitten by a rabid animal will probably die.