



First Case Of Rabies In 40 Years Found In North Carolina

RALEIGH—The first case of rabies in a skunk in North Carolina in 40 years was reported in Watagua County, according to Dr. John Freeman, head of the veterinary public health branch of the N.C. Department of Human Resources' Division of Health Services. This first appearance of rabies in an animal other than bats is an indication that the rabies epidemic in the west and south of the state is beginning to move into North Carolina, Freeman said.

Citizens are advised to have their dogs and cats immunized against rabies and to avoid strange animals and strange acting animals.

The first symptom of rabies is a change in the attitude and individual behavior of the animal, Freeman said.

"They do things that are abnormal for that animal. Rabies is a disease of the central nervous system and the brain. As the damage progresses it affects the personality of the animal," he said.

The skunk was discovered by a Watagua County farmer when he went into his yard and found the animal chasing his dog. He shot the skunk and turned the carcass over to the county animal control officer who discovered rabies. The farmer suspected rabies because skunks are normally shy and retiring creatures.

"Anyone suspecting rabies in an animal should call the county animal control officer immediately. He should not attempt to capture the animal himself unless it is an emergency situation," Freeman said.

With the exception of bats, no rabies have been reported in animals in North Carolina until this sitting for a number of years. In 1975, a rabid cat was found in Bladen County, the first case of rabies in a cat in 21 years. No rabid dogs have been seen in 13 years. This is the first positive finding of rabies in a skunk in North Carolina in 40 years.

May is Trails Outdoors Month and North Carolina citizens have a variety of opportunities to see the state while hiking, biking, horseback riding and canoeing the more than 2,000 miles of trails in the state.

For all the two-wheelers, May is also National Bike Month and May 1-7 has been proclaimed North Carolina Bike Week. Many local organizations are conducting rodeos, mass bike rides, safety programs for bicycling, commute-to-work programs, bike-a-thons and road races.

The Cape Fear Cyclists in the Wilmington-New Hanover County area have planned a 10-day bikefest to coincide with N.C. Bike Week. On May 1 they are having the 2nd annual River to the Sea Bike-a-thon and a Spring Bicycle Rodeo. A 100- and 50-mile ride through the surrounding countryside will be held on May 2 and a moonlight meander for romantics is planned for May 3-7. The Cape Fear Bikefest will be wrapped up with a Bike Expo, highlighted with awards, movies, workshops, and demonstrations. For more information contact Bob Jamieson (919-256-4161) in the Wilmington Regional Office of the State Department of Natural Resources and Community Development.

Riders, hikers and paddlers can join the first ever Mountains-to-Sea Trek. The North Carolina Trails Association is promising nine fun-filled weeks of hiking, bicycling, horseback riding and canoeing from the Blue Ridge Mountains to the Outer Banks.

Pack your gear and join the Trek, which began during April, at any of the following locations:

May 1 at Stone Mountain State Park in Wilkes County;

May 8 and 9 for the second annual Stokes-Surry counties Trails Extravaganza with games and events at Pilot Mountain State Park;

May 15 is the date when Guilford County Trekkers will have breakfast and tour the Natural Science Center before hiking to downtown Greensboro for the dedication of the first urban historical trail in North Carolina. The historical trail will lead trekkers to the campus of Greensboro College for a noon lunch, and on to High Point for an overnight stay at Oak Hollow Campground. For more information contact Willie Taylor at 919-855-9399;

May 22 the trek will be in Sanford at Buckhorn Trail to the campsite at the Deep River. A wagon train will be the feature of this section of the trek.

May 27 the trek moves from the N.C. State Fairgrounds via

Hillsborough Street to the Capitol for a noon meeting with Governor Jim Hunt. The trekkers will spend the night at Clemmons State Forest near Clayton.

Additional information on the entire Mountains-to-Sea Trek may be obtained from Kay Scott in Raleigh, Division of Parks and Recreation at 919-733-7795.

If the idea of hitting the trails does not meet your fancy, there are plenty of other events in Outdoors North Carolina during May.

The City of Wilson will have "Sunday in the Park" activities on May 2, including live music, an active artist show, displays of children's art work and supervised art activities for children. There is no admission charge for the event, set from 2 to 6 P.M.

Horselovers should mark May 8 on the calendar for Tanglewood Steeplechase in Clemmons. More than 15,000 people are expected at the 15th annual sanctioned steeplechase that offers a \$25,000 purse.

The races begin at 2 P.M. but the gates open at 10 A.M. for picnickers. Admission is \$45.00 for a reserved space for six people to a vehicle or \$5.00 per person at the gate. For more information contact Roger Lemmons, Tanglewood Park Director, at 919-766-6421.

Many more Outdoors North Carolina events will occur in May. To find out what is happening, or to get additional information, contact Melba Strickland, Department of Natural Resources and Community Development, P.O. Box 27687, Raleigh, or call 919-733-6376.

Gospel Sing To Be Held

The Singing Laymen will hold their first annual gospel sing May 7 and 8 at the Windsor Assembly of God Campground. The singing starts at 7:30 P.M. each evening. On Friday, the guest singers will be Hopper Brothers & Connie and Danny & The Singing Ambassadors; on Saturday they will be The Easter Brothers and The Cavaliers.

The singing will be held rain or shine. Camping facilities are available on location and a motel is located 1/2 mile from campground. Tickets are \$6 for both days or \$4 per day. For further information, contact Mark Hoggard at 919-794-2682, 919-356-2397, or 919-794-4469.

When dieting, don't skip meals or eat only a token breakfast or lunch. Skipping meals may lead to unwise snacking.

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