



Under the Scope

Florida Department of Health in Indian River County



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Where the Wild Things Are - Keeping Humans & Wildlife Safe

Spring is here, and with it comes breeding season, baby animals, and the potential for human encounters with wildlife. These interactions can prove hazardous to both humans and wildlife. Wildlife can carry diseases that pose serious human health risks, and well-intentioned humans can put wildlife at risk when attempting to “help” them.

Florida wildlife laws require that people caring for sick, injured or orphaned wildlife have special permits, facilities and training to do so. Possessing wildlife as pets also has strict permitting requirements. Possessing or caring for wildlife without meeting these requirements is illegal, which helps to assure the safety of both the wildlife and humans.

Raccoons are the major carrier of rabies in the Southeastern US, including Florida. Rabies is a fatal disease that is transmitted through the saliva of infected animals. Unlike dogs and cats, raccoons can shed rabies virus in their saliva without showing signs of illness. Whenever a raccoon bites, scratches or otherwise exposes a person to its saliva, there is a possibility of exposure to rabies. Such exposures require the raccoon to be euthanized and tested for rabies, and rabies post exposure prophylaxis for the Good Samaritan, if the animal is determined to be infected or cannot be located.

Although bats are a reservoir for rabies, they pose little threat to humans. However, bats should never be handled, as rabies is usually transmitted through bites. Bats consume insects and are an important natural resource. Bats are legally protected in Florida, and normally give birth from mid-April through July. Their young begin to fly within 3 to 6 weeks. Care should be taken not to disturb maternity colonies during this time.

Ways to Keep Humans and Wildlife Safe

- * Never feed or handle wildlife.
- * Never pick up baby animals and remove them from their natural environment. Even if you don't see the parent with the baby, they are either out getting food or watching the baby from a distance.
- * If you encounter injured or orphaned wildlife:

Call Humane Society of Vero Beach & Indian River County:
772-388-4592. Wildlife brought to the Humane Society are taken to a licensed wildlife hospital or rehabilitator for care.

Call Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWCC)
Wildlife Alert Hotline: **888-404-FWCC (888-404-3922)** to report.

Additional Resources:

Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, Wildlife Assistance: <http://myfwc.com/conservation/you-serve/assistnuisance-wildlife/>

Humane Society of Vero Beach & Indian River County, Wild & Exotic Animals: <http://www.hsvb.org/wild-and-exotic-animals.html>



with 3-year Comparison, Indian River County

Cases (rate per 100,000 population)	Florida		Indian River County	
	YTD 2015	YTD 2015	YTD 2014	YTD 2013
Enteric Diseases				
Campylobacteriosis	918 (4.7)	15 (10.5)	13 (9.1)	10 (7.1)
Cryptosporidiosis	179 (0.9)	3 (2.1)	4 (2.8)	4 (2.8)
<i>Escherichia coli</i> , Shiga Toxin-Producing (STEC)	110 (0.6)	1 (0.7)	1 (0.7)	0
Giardiasis	267 (1.4)	1 (0.7)	2 (1.4)	7 (5.0)
Salmonellosis	935 (4.8)	5 (3.5)	12 (8.4)	10 (7.1)
Shigellosis	523 (2.7)	0	2 (1.4)	0
<i>Vibrio alginolyticus</i>	5 (0.03)	0	0	0
<i>Vibrio parahaemolyticus</i>	10 (0.1)	1 (0.7)	0	0
<i>Vibrio vulnificus</i>	3 (0.02)	0	0	0
Vector Borne, Zoonoses				
Chikungunya Fever	65 (0.3)	0	0	0
Dengue Fever	12 (0.1)	0	0	0
Ehrlichiosis/Anaplasmosis, HME (<i>Ehrlichia chaffeensis</i>)	4 (0.02)	0	0	0
Lyme Disease	44 (0.2)	0	2 (1.4)	1 (0.7)
Rabies, Animal	22 (0.1)	0	0	0
Rabies, Possible Human Exposure	877 (4.5)	8 (5.6)	4 (2.8)	5 (3.5)
CNS & Invasive Diseases				
<i>Haemophilus influenzae</i> (invasive disease)	54 (0.3)	0	0	0
Meningitis (Bacterial, Cryptococcal, Mycotic)	35 (0.2)	0	0	0
<i>Streptococcus pneumoniae</i> , invasive disease, drug resistant	31 (0.2)	0	3 (2.1)	1 (0.7)
<i>Streptococcus pneumoniae</i> , invasive disease, susceptible	147 (0.8)	0	1 (0.7)	2 (1.4)
Vaccine Preventable				
Pertussis	99 (0.5)	1 (0.7)	0	1 (0.7)
Varicella	245 (1.3)	1 (0.7)	2 (1.4)	2 (1.4)
Viral Hepatitis				
Hepatitis A	35 (0.2)	1 (0.7)	0	0
Hepatitis B (+HBsAg in pregnant women)	127 (0.6)	1 (0.7)	0	1 (0.7)
Hepatitis B, Acute	120 (0.6)	1 (0.7)	0	2 (1.4)
Hepatitis B, Chronic	1,670 (8.5)	8 (5.6)	7 (4.9)	4 (2.8)
Hepatitis C, Acute	52 (0.3)	0	0	2 (1.4)
Hepatitis C, Chronic	7,735 (39.6)	54 (37.6)	47 (32.8)	44 (31.1)
Hepatitis D	0	0	0	1 (0.7)
HIV / AIDS*				
HIV	1,195 (6.1)	1 (0.7)	4 (2.8)	3 (2.1)
AIDS	372 (1.9)	0	1 (0.7)	2 (1.4)
STDs*				
Chlamydia	13,179 (67.4)	67 (46.7)	60 (41.8)	77 (54.5)
Gonorrhea	3,205 (16.4)	8 (5.6)	7 (4.9)	9 (6.4)
Infectious Syphilis	290 (1.5)	0	1 (0.7)	0
Others				
Carbon Monoxide poisoning	77 (0.4)	0	0	0
Hansen's Disease (Leprosy)	6 (0.03)	1 (0.7)	0	0
Lead poisoning	259 (1.3)	0	0	1 (0.7)
Legionellosis	98 (0.5)	2 (1.4)	1 (0.7)	0
Mercury Poisoning	7 (0.04)	0	0	0
Pesticide-related illness or injury	17 (0.1)	0	0	0
Saxitoxin Poisoning (Paralytic Shellfish Poisoning)	0	0	0	0
Staphylococcal Enterotoxin B Poisoning	0	0	0	0
Tuberculosis*	67 (0.3)	0	2 (1.4)	1 (0.7)

*2015 data are provisional and subject to change; YTD as of 02/28/2015