PRESS RELEASE
March 05, 2020

CANINE DISTEMPER ON THE RISE IN WILDLIFE
Vaccinate Your Pet(s)

(SANTA BARBARA, CA) -- Santa Barbara County Animal Services is advising the community to be on high alert after identifying multiple cases of distemper in wildlife throughout Santa Barbara County, with a high concentration in the northern parts of the County. The public was first alerted to this risk to domestic dogs in January 2020. We are still seeing affected wildlife in heavily populated areas, specifically coyotes, foxes and raccoons. We encourage owners to be sure their pets are current on all vaccines.

Canine Distemper is a highly contagious disease caused by a virus that attacks the respiratory, gastrointestinal, and nervous system. Canine distemper poses no threat to human health, but unvaccinated dogs can become infected.

Wildlife that are infected with distemper often move slowly, stumble, and can appear blind and/or confused. They may not be fearful of humans at this point and can become aggressive if cornered or feel threatened. Distemper is most commonly spread through coughing infected respiratory secretions but can also be shed through most other bodily secretions, including urine.

If you notice any wildlife behaving abnormally or sick, do not approach the animal. In the unincorporated parts of the county, call Santa Barbara County Animal Services at (805) 934-6119, press “7” to reach a staff member.

Keep your dog(s) on a leash, scan your residence before allowing your dog(s) out, and do not leave pet food outside that can attract wildlife.

The cost of prevention is much cheaper than the cost of treatment, so please call your veterinarian today to have your pet vaccinated or for any questions about your pet’s health or vaccination history.

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