



*Once regarded as just a rascal, rabies has made the raccoon a danger*

## On The Road In New Hampshire

### *Disposal of "Road Kill" Requires Special Precautions*

Disposal of dead or injured animals from roads has long been one of the road crews' most unpleasant jobs. With the spread of rabies through populations of some mammal species, it has also become a potentially dangerous task.

Marsha Barden of the NH Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service has provided some helpful guidelines for handling dead animals. The key guideline is:

**If it's a mammal, take precautions.**

High risk animals are raccoons, skunks, woodchucks, foxes, bats, dogs, and cats. Lower risk animals are squirrels, coyotes, rabbits, fishers, goats, horses, beavers and muskrats. Mice or rats are of very little or no risk.

The rabies virus is in the saliva or brain tissue of the infected animal; not in the urine, blood, or feces. The virus will not live long outside the body; saliva that is dry is generally considered safe. Cold weather preserves

the virus inside the brain, while hot weather destroys it rather quickly. However, because the time of death of a road-killed animal is unknown, all dead high-risk animals should be treated as sources of possible exposure.

One should use a shovel or rubber gloves to handle suspicious animals. They should be double-bagged, and disposed of by burial at least three feet deep or incineration. Shovels and gloves should be disinfected with a solution of five parts water and one part chlorine bleach.

If someone is scratched by a high risk animal's teeth or claws; or gets saliva from a high risk animal in the mouth, nose, or eyes; the saliva should be washed from the site for ten minutes, and a physician consulted. Until directed otherwise, keep the suspect animal refrigerated in case it needs testing. If the animal is a cat, dog, or other domestic animal, contact the local animal control office or police department. If it is a wild animal, contact Fish and Game Dispatch at 271-3361 or Animal Damage Control (Marsha Barden) at 225-1416.

*Editor's Note: Our thanks to David Wadleigh, Road Agent in Tilton, for calling this matter to our attention and putting us in contact with Marsha.*

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