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Rabid fox attacks children

By Susan Morse

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SEABROOK - A rabid red fox attacked and bit two children and a dog on Saturday before officers cornered the animal under a house and shot it.

The animal was confirmed rabid on Monday afternoon, according to Seabrook Police Chief David Currier. Animal Control Officer Jeff Baillargeon brought the dead animal to Concord on Monday morning, the earliest the fox could be tested.

The children have already begun receiving rabies shots, Currier said.

The fox began terrorizing the south end neighborhood of Walton Road to Collins and Centennial Streets about 1 p.m. Saturday, when police received a number of calls.

It ran toward a 12-year old girl who was playing in her back yard on Quaker Lane and bit her, Currier said. The bite was not serious but broke the skin, he said.

The attack was unprovoked, he said. The girl, after she was bitten, kicked the animal four or five times, he said.

"On Saturday we received a call that a fox was acting suspicious and unusual," Currier said. "We started receiving calls, it was roaming the area from Seabrook Elementary School to Walton Road, to the underpass, almost as far as the fire station (on Centennial Street) and also Collins Street."

On Nicholas Way, a road off Centennial Street, the fox ran out of the woods and bit a 4-year-old boy, Currier said.

"It came out of the woods and went after the child," he said.

The fox then ran onto Centennial Street, where a woman was walking her black Lab. The fox attacked and bit the dog. The owner, who patted the dog afterward, is also undergoing rabies treatments, Currier said.

Neither the children nor the dog suffered serious wounds. Police are not releasing the identities of those who were attacked.

Police called in the animal control officer and also contacted the town manager and other

staff to open up Town Hall and get word out on the local cable channel.

"We immediately put a notice on Channel 22," Currier said.

The message was still airing as of Monday.

"There is no reason to panic," Currier told residents. "People need to be cognizant it's springtime, foxes are coming out of their dens, they're likely to see foxes and raccoons now. If they're acting suspicious, call."

The fox seen on Saturday was not foaming at the mouth, one of the signs of rabies, according to Currier.

Officers tracked the animal to Collins Street, where it tried to attack a domestic cat and feral cats. It ran under a house. Baillargeon put the animal down about 6 p.m.

The concern now is there may be other rabid fox and other animals.

Police received no reports of unusual animal activity on Sunday.

"It's not unusual to see fox," Currier said. "It's unusual to see it acting in the manner it did. Obviously, this was not normal, that's why we're concerned the animal is diseased. Clearly where there's one, there may be more."

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