



MEDIA ADVISORY FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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RABIES-POSITIVE BAT FOUND IN ZOO'S GIRAFFE BARN: SB PUBLIC HEALTH DECLARES PUBLIC NOT AT RISK

(Santa Barbara, CA, May 23, 2019) – A bat found in the Zoo’s giraffe barn tested positive for rabies on May 17. Santa Barbara County Public Health has declared the public is not at risk, but the Zoo has opted to close the giraffe feeding deck for 30 days as a precautionary measure based on Public Health’s recommendation. The Zoo’s giraffes will remain on exhibit during the quarantine.

"After extensive consultation and collaboration between the State Veterinarian of California's Department of Public Health, our Santa Barbara County Public Health Officer, the Vice President of Animal Care & Health for the Santa Barbara Zoo, and a representative from our Department of Animal Services, we have developed a comprehensive action plan that aims to keep both Zoo visitors and the animals safe," says Tara Diller, Director of Santa Barbara County Animal Services.

“We have enforced all safety protocols, including making sure rabies immunizations for all of our mammals are up to date. As the giraffes will be quarantined for 30 days, only vaccinated staff will be working with them during that time,” says Dr. Julie Barnes, the Zoo’s Vice President of Animal Care & Health.

“Because rabies also circulates in other local wildlife populations such as skunks, raccoons and foxes, the potential to come across a rabies-positive wild animal exists not only at the Zoo but everywhere: at home, while hiking, etc.,” says Barnes. “We work closely with local health officials to monitor potential *zoonoses* (diseases which can transfer from animals to humans) in the area.”

The Public Health Department advises the public to be aware of wild animals. Do not approach, handle, or feed wild and unfamiliar animals, even if they appear tame. If you see a dead bat, don’t touch it: call Animal Control (805) 681-5285. For more information, visit www.sbzoo.org/bat-info.

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*Known as one of the world's most beautiful zoos, the **Santa Barbara Zoo** is located on 30 acres of botanic gardens and is home to nearly 500 individual animals in open, naturalistic habitats. It is accredited by the [Association of Zoos & Aquariums](#) (AZA), representing the highest level of animal care, and participates in AZA endangered species programs for Asian elephant, California condor, island fox, and Western lowland gorilla, among others. A private nonprofit corporation, the Santa Barbara Zoo depends on community support, not tax dollars, for operations and improvements.*

The Zoo is open daily from 10 a.m. – 5 p.m.; general admission is \$18 for adults, \$13 for seniors aged 65+, \$11 for children 2-12, and children under 2 are free. Parking is \$11. Visit www.sbzoo.org.