More rabid bats are found

By Alice Collins staff writer

Two more rabid bats were found in Oakland County last week — both at residences in Bloomfield Township — bringing the total to four confirmed cases since mid number. cases since mid summer.

cases since mid summer.

The chief of the communicable discase program at the State Health Department in Lansing said Tuesday it is
unlikely that a rabies epidemic is on
the way, however, he didn't rule out
that possibility.

"Bats usually transmit rables to other bats," said Dr. Donald Coohon, "and as long as it continues to be batto-bat transmissions, we're not too con-

The biggest concern, he said, is that the disease might spread to cats. "It would then be a greater hazard to peo-

would then be a greater nazaru to people."

He urged that people have their cats vaccinated against rable:

"Skunk-to-skunk and bat-to-bat is the most common scenario." he said. "But once in a while if another animal or numan beings get in the way of that transmission, then we're frouble."

Cats, skunks and somtlines dogs and raccoons will "stumble onto one (a dead bat) and eat it," he said.

THE FIRST rabid bat discovered this year in Oakland County was found in mid summer in a swimming pool at Oakland University.

Oakland University.

The second was found biting itself as it lay dying on the floor of a bouse near downtown Birmingham on Aug. 24.

Bloomfield Township Deputy Police Chief Dennis McGee confirmed Tues-

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day that two bats found last week at homes in the west-central part of the township were rabid.

township were rabid.

On the advice of personal physicians and the Oakland County Health Department, many of the persons who came in contact or possible contact with the diseased creatures are already receiving the contact of the contact with the diseased creatures are already receiving the contact with the diseased creatures are already receiving the contact with the contact w

The third bat which tested positive was found early last week flopping around on an outside patio at a house on Echo Lane.

Last Thursday morning, Lytia Cunningham found the fourth bat. It was stitug on a window still in her son's bedroom just above her son's bed. Her child was in school at the time.

The Cunningham's house is on Echo Road about a quarter of a mile from the house on Echo Lane.

"THE BAT'S wings were spread but it wasn't acting strange in any way like the others I read about," said Cunning-ham. "But because I'd read about the other rabid bats in the paper, I closed the bedroom door and called animal control at the Bloomfield Township po-lice."

control at the Bloomfield Township po-lice.
"We'd had one in the house just five weeks before, but I just let it out be-cause I hadn't heard about the rabies,"

CUNNINGHAM SAID their two children were started on the rables shots on Thursday even before it was determined that the bat was rable. "Our pediatrician advised us not to wait."

pediatrician advised us not to wait," she said.

"When the lab called me at 4:13 Priday afternoon that it was positive," said Cunningham, "then our pamic broke loose."

Cunningham and her husband started receiving the shots that day. The township welfare officer is also receiving injections.

Dr. Coobon said a rabid bat was also found in Detroit on Aug. 25.

The Tourist of the said the state lab is testing many bats every day and "we're running about two percent positive."

Last March, a 5-year-old girl died af-

tive."

Last March, a 5-year-old girl died af-ter being bitten by a rabid hat in Hills-dale County. She was the first person in Michigan to die of rables in 25 years.

RADIES IS a virus that attacks the nervous system. It has a two-to-elight week incubation period but can strike as early as 10 days or as late as over year after the victim is infected, executing to Dr. Carolyn Bird of the Oak-land County Health Department.

"It's apread by the saliva of the animal, so we suggest that you get out of the way of any animals suspected of

having it. And don't handle them because they could have saliva on their fur."

Unless a victim receives vaccine shots before the onset of symptoms, the virus is fatal. There is one known exception.

Early symptoms include apprehension and realisances. Severe analyty follows, along with paralysis of the swallowing muscles. Foaming at the moeth results from an inability to swallow, buffurium, convulsions, coms and death follow.

Skunks, bats and raccoons are con-

and death follow.

Skuhts, bats and raccoons are considered high-risk animals, said Bird. Raccoons are particularly troublesome because they are often found in the city and are sometimes fed or kept as pets.

Raccoon and bat populations in the Birmingham-Biomfield area are high. This is an especially active time for bats to be flying around.

bats to be flying around.

EXTREME CAUTION is advised when dealing with an animal which is believed to be rabid. If an animal such as a bat is found in a house or building, it should be confined to one room, with padding placed under the door to keep it inside. It should be removed only by an animal control expert.

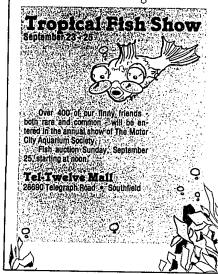
In recent years, the incidence of rables in raccoons has reached epidemic proportions on the southeastern Atlantic scaboard and is currently as far north as southern Pennsylvania, said Dr. Coohon. There is a serious epidemic now in the Washington, D.C. Maryland-Virginia area," he said.

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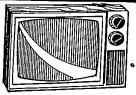


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