

Rabies Quarantine Declared in Arizona Town

Flagstaff residents must keep dogs, cats on their property for 90 days.

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The city of Flagstaff, Ariz., has cited a substantial increase in the number of rabid wild animals found in and around the area as a reason for declaring a rabies quarantine, which places restrictions on cats and dogs in and around the city.

The quarantine remains in effect for up to 90 days. It also places restrictions on feeding and interacting with animals, according to the Coconino County Health Department.

Supervisors approved the plan Tuesday, April 7, calling for certain mandatory restrictions on residents within the quarantine area. For example, pet owners must keep cats and dogs on their property, or on a leash no longer than 6 feet, for 90 days. Cats or dogs found at-large will be impounded, the department said.

During the quarantine period, a team will set out vaccine bait in selected parts of the city, as well as continue public education efforts. Pet owners are urged to avoid leaving pet food outside after sundown.

Fourteen foxes, six skunks, and one ringtail cat within the Flagstaff urban area have tested positive for rabies since Oct. 31, 2008, the department said. Rabies is a viral infection that affects the nervous system of mammals, including humans, and it can be spread from wild animals to pets.