

# **Animal Distemper**

**Due to the number of calls that have been received regarding raccoons in the residential areas a question and answer sheet has been made to better educate the community on distemper in raccoons.**

## **What is Distemper?**

Distemper is a disease which can be spread between dogs and wildlife. It's caused by canine distemper virus, but the "canine" part of the name can be a little misleading, since this virus readily infects some other species such as raccoons.

## **What are some signs that an animal has Canine Distemper?**

Raccoons with distemper may move slowly and may stumble as they walk. They lose their fear of humans, appear blind and confused, and may wander aimlessly and may become aggressive if cornered. A mucus discharge will often be present around the eyes and nose, and may be accompanied by coughing, diarrhea, vomiting, tremors, seizures or chewing fits. They may only exhibit some of these symptoms and otherwise appear quite healthy.

## **How is Canine Distemper spread?**

Distemper is spread through contact with bodily fluids, and though it cannot infect humans, it can spread to cats and dogs quite easily, even without direct contact with an infected raccoon.

## **How to prevent Distemper from spreading to your pets?**

- Keeping dogs that are outside under control so they don't encounter wildlife.
- Ensuring dogs are properly vaccinated against distemper and rabies.
- Taking particular care to prevent exposure of young unvaccinated dogs to wildlife.
- Discouraging raccoons from taking up residence in yards

## **Who to call if you see an animal with Canine Distemper?**

If you see an animal that may have Distemper you may report it to the Ministry of Natural Resources; however if you would like to have this animal removed from your property please call a local trapper or hunter. If it is an emergency situation OPP may be called to destroy the animal.