

Sickly pup had rabies

Virus confirmed after severely ill Sweetwaters dog is euthanised



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A CASE of rabies has been confirmed by Chase Valley Vet after a sickly pup from Sweetwaters was brought in on Monday.

The pup, a stray, was picked up three weeks ago by Kwazi Makhonza on the Sweetwaters Road and taken to his home.

On Sunday, Makhonza posted a plea for help on the Pietermaritzburg Businesses Facebook page, that the stray, which he had named Simba, was ill.

"I just met little Simba about three weeks ago. He stays with my mom. Simba woke up on Saturday shaking, jaws locked, not breathing well (choking), sensitive on front paws, sick. It's scary," he wrote.

"We tried to send him to a vet on Sat-

urday, but we could not afford the fees, but the ladies there were so helpful; they suggested a recovery meal and advised us to give him lots of water, keep him warm and hope for the best. I am afraid we might be losing the battle, but he's been holding strong," said the post.

"May anyone who can please help. We would love to see little Simba grow, that is if we are not too late."

Chase Valley Vet's Dr Estee van Aardt said Simba was brought into their offices on Monday and was thought to be about three months old.

"The dog was quite flat, and couldn't swallow," said Van Aardt.

"The owner said it looked like it was choking and had been that way for two to three days, and was getting worse."

She said the dog was euthanised because of its state, and samples were sent

to the Onderstepoort rabies laboratory in Pretoria for testing.

The results came back positive.

uMgungundlovu State Vet Dr Allen Still said that the virus may have either been transmitted to the dog by a wild animal such as a jackal, but may have also originated from a dog brought in from another area.

He said the area had not had a rabid dog incident in a "long time", and that residents who had not vaccinated their pets should do so as a precaution.

He said the State Clinic, at 458 Town-bush Road, was open for vaccinations between 2 pm and 4 pm on Fridays, and that the clinic often travelled to rural areas to vaccinate dogs.

"When people think of a rabid dog, they get an image of a mad, barking dog, frothing at the mouth, but this is not

always the case. Sometimes the dog just appears very weak and is semi-paralysed, and recognising it can be difficult."

A source who could not be named said the virus moved quite slowly in a community but can move long distances when people move infected dogs.

"Most of all human rabies is from dog bites and so wherever people keep dogs the disease is a threat," said the source.

"Rabies is most common in dogs and we have a small wildlife cycle at present focused in Underberg, originating from the Midlands.

"Dog rabies is more of a threat to humans due to the close contact, however, all rabies is life threatening and must be taken seriously. Current dog hot spots are in Ugu and the communal areas from Illembe north ward."

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Simba was put to sleep on Monday at the Chase Valley Vet as he was struggling to swallow, eat and was suffering shivers and hallucinations. It was later confirmed that Simba had rabies

PHOTO: FACEBOOK