



# WARNING

## Confirmation of rabies in the Cape Fur Seal population!

You need to be informed and know how to respond when you encounter an animal that is showing signs of abnormal behaviour, which could indicate that the animal is rabid!

### WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

- Rabies is transmitted through direct contact between infected animals, including licking, scratching, nipping, and biting. Rabies can be transmitted to people through the lick, scratch, or bite of a rabid animal or any saliva contact with broken skin.
- Given that rabies infections are fatal in unvaccinated animals and people, and there is no treatment, a precautionary approach is being taken.

**Not all cape fur seals are infected by rabies, therefore members of the public should be on high alert for the following abnormal behaviours exhibited by potentially rabid seals:**

#### In the Water

- Highly aggressive behaviour towards other seals, inanimate objects, boats, or people.
- Attacking and biting other seals, especially around the face.
- Chasing or attacking vessels or attempting to board them aggressively.
- Seals isolated by others within their colony, indicating a potential rabies infection.

#### On the Beach

- Unprovoked aggressive behaviour such as charging at or rushing toward the public.
- Aggressively approaching or attacking dogs, people, or litter.

#### Unusual Behaviour (Water & Land):

- Snapping at imaginary objects, head bashing, twitching, and uncontrollable shaking.
- Odd swimming patterns, including floating with a hunched back or head above water.
- Signs of physical distress, such as red eyes, retching, and foaming at the mouth.

### PRECAUTIONARY MEASURES:

- **Avoid all human and animal contact with seals.**
- If a seal bites anyone in the water, members of the public should be alerted that they need to **leave the water** (eg, shark siren, flag) and the water is closed to the public.. The shark spotters (SS), life savers on duty or Municipal Officials are to contact **CapeNature (WhatsApp pin location and video clip of seal to CapeNature at 0832362924)** and the **State Veterinarian** immediately. The swimming beach can only be re-opened once the authorities have captured the seal, or the seal has definitively left the area.
- **Anyone bitten** by the seal **must seek urgent medical attention** (wound to be immediately washed with water and soap for 10-15mins). Patient needs to be taken to the nearest hospital to receive rabies vaccinations. The patient needs to sensitize the hospital that there is a possibility that the seal is rabid.
- Anyone with an **animal bitten by a seal in the last 6 months** should consult the local state veterinarian and the District Disaster Management. Report the date and location of the bite event, type of wounds, treatment received, and vaccination status of the animal patient. The same wound cleaning process as for humans should be followed if your animal is bitten by a seal.
- **Ensure your animal's rabies vaccine is up to date.** By law, all dogs and cats in South Africa must be vaccinated against rabies by their owners. **It is recommended that all dogs should be kept on leashes.**

## CONTACT DETAILS FOR STATE VETERINARIAN

Area	CONTACT NO.	E-MAIL	ADDRESS
George	044-803-3771/0	SVGeorge@westerncape.gov.za	4 Varing Avenue, George
Boland	021-808-5028/ 5253	SVBoland@westerncape.gov.za	Western Cape DOA building, Muldersvlei road, Elsenburg
Swellendam	021-808-5059/ 028-425-4850	DOA.svswellendam@westerncape.gov.za	67 Voortrekker St, Swellendam
Beaufort West	023-414-9220/1	DOA.svbeaufortwest@westerncape.gov.za	Blyth St, Beaufort West
Vredendal	027-201-3514/0	DOA.svvredendal@westerncape.gov.za	Cnr Matzikama and Noord St. Vredendal
Malmesbury	022-433-8915/0	DOA.svmalmesbury@westerncape.gov.za	Cnr Spoorweg and Munisipale St. Malmesbury
Oudtshoorn	044-203-9443/5	DOA.svoudtshoorn@westerncape.gov.za	43 Van Der Riet St, Oudtshoorn
Worcester	021-808-5052	DOA.svworcester@westerncape.gov.za	30 Van Arckel St. Worcester
CapeNature	083 236 2924	estuaries@capenature.co.za	



Western Cape  
Government

FOR YOU