

Officials: Bobcat in attacks was rabid

by UPI

INVERNESS, Fla. -- Health officials said Thursday that a bobcat that attacked an elderly man and a young boy in Citrus County, Fla., appears to have been rabid.

Virginia Crandall, a Citrus County Health Department registered nurse, said as a result of the rabies diagnosis, both 71-year-old Frank Womack and 10-year-old Johnathon Knecht will have to undergo a regimen of shots during a four-week period to ensure their health, The Tampa (Fla.) Tribune said.

"The treatment is very effective," Crandall said.

The bobcat's aggressive behavior and physical condition had led health officials to suspect the animal was rabid, and tests on the animal killed by Womack were positive for the disease.

Wildlife officials said the bobcat that Womack dispatched in self-defense during last Saturday's attack is likely the same animal that attacked Knecht a short while earlier.

Knecht was attacked in Withlacoochee State Forest as he and his boy scout troop were preparing to explore park caves, the Tribune said. Both Knecht and Womack received minor scratches and bites during the attacks.

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