

# Unusually aggressive mule deer in Sisters

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Correspondent

The sheriff's office in Sisters has recently received a surge of calls about deer aggression.

Every spring, mule deer does give birth to fawns in Sisters Country. And every spring these does are very protective of their young, so protective that many become aggressive toward any animal they see as a threat.

And that includes dogs, any size dog for that matter. A doe doesn't care if your furry friend is a Rottweiler or a toy poodle.

The doe doesn't care if you and your pooch are out for a quiet walk after dinner and are ignoring her from 50 feet away. If she feels that her fawns are threatened — even though they are hidden a block away — she will charge you and your dog.

Be extremely cautious when walking your dog and have him on a leash at all times. Don't think that because your dog is protective of you and that he weighs 90 pounds he'll survive a doe attack. Not only does a doe outweigh him, her sharp hoofs are a powerful weapon.

"About a week or two ago, we began getting calls about a doe that has been unusually aggressive and charging at people out with their dogs," a Sisters deputy said. "It could be because the doe not only recently had fawns, but could have been hurt or has a wound. It seems she was first spotted by the Sisters City Hall and then near Sisters Athletic Club, on the outskirts of Creekside Park."

These incidents are a reminder to Sisters residents that urban deer can be very

dangerous.

"I don't think that people understand that the key is to stop feeding the deer once and for all, and in the long run they may move further into the wilderness where they belong," said wildlife biologist Randy Lewis of the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife.

**"... the key is to stop feeding the deer once and for all, and in the long run they may move further into the wilderness..."**  
— Randy Lewis

Deer become habituated to the presence of humans, and they lose their natural wariness of people. Sisters recently adopted a new ordinance prohibiting feeding mule deer. Violation carries a fine.

"These does will continue to be aggressive for a couple more weeks, so please use caution," Lewis said. "You may carry an air horn; they are loud and it stuns them for a second. You can also carry a super-soaker that sprays water or even pepper spray if you think it's going to be a serious attack. One thing I would suggest is to avoid any area where you faced an aggressive mule deer."

Deer have also jumped low fences to get into residents' yards seeking food such as flowering plants and shrubs. If you have a dog that stays in the yard, keep a close watch on him. Deer have attacked small dogs while in a yard searching for food.

## MULE DEER: Alert authorities to sick deer in Sisters

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first identified in California in 1994. Infected deer have clinical signs common to other diseases, such as bluetongue or pneumonia. However, chronic symptoms include ulcers and abscesses in the mouth and throat.

Acute symptoms include rapid or open-mouth breathing, foaming or drooling at the mouth, diarrhea (possibly bloody), weakness, and copious amounts of fluid in the body cavity. Death can occur within three to five days from the time the deer is exposed to the virus. Adults are subject to the disease, but fawns are particularly vulnerable, as is seen by the low fawn production this year.

In 2001, Oregon State University Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory confirmed the presence of AHD in one adult black-tailed deer doe from southwest Oregon. Biologists suspect that the deaths of several dozen other deer in the same area also may have been caused by AHD.

The following year in 2002, ODFW and the Oregon State University Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory confirmed the presence of AHD in a viral disease outbreak in Central Oregon (Deschutes, Jefferson, and Wasco counties). Then, between May 9 and August 1, 2002, an estimated 400-plus

deer died from the virus in the Crooked River Ranch area and Sisters Country.

There is no treatment for individual deer infected with AHD. Monitoring, proper carcass disposal, and not moving infected live deer are methods to minimize the spread of the disease to new areas. ODFW wildlife biologists are currently attempting to determine how widespread the disease may be.

Transmission of AHD is by direct contact among deer, (usually between bodily fluids), and possibly airborne routes. High-density deer populations could have a higher risk for the disease due to the ease of transmission.

There are no known cases of humans getting sick from AHD. However, if living or hunting in an infected area, it's a good idea to wear disposable rubber gloves when handling carcasses. (Use proper disposal methods of the gloves afterwards.) People who may be sick for any reason or who have a compromised immune system should also take special precautions around these carcasses.

In addition, there are no known health risks of eating meat from a deer infected with AHD; however, experts recommend thoroughly cooking any meat from animals from an infected area. It's also a good time to thoroughly check the meat for any lead fragments that may have entered muscle and internal organs when the animal was shot.

It is not known if AHD has been present long-term in Oregon deer herds, or if it recently arrived, however, the death of deer in southwest Oregon in 2001, and the death of AHD-infected deer in Sisters Country in 2002 seems to indicate the disease may have spread from California northward to Oregon.

Action by the City of Sisters to halt feeding deer within city limits will help in preventing further outbreak of AHD in Sisters Country mule deer. ODFW staff have repeatedly encouraged people to avoid providing feed or water stations for deer because these activities may assist in spreading the disease.

You can also help ODFW monitor AHD by being aware of any deer that (literally) fall over and die in your vicinity. They're not interested in road-kills, for obvious reasons, but any deer found dead — or in stress for no obvious reason — should be reported to the ODFW Bend Regional Office as soon as possible by calling 541-388-6363. On weekends, when the ODFW office is closed, call the Oregon State Police or Deschutes County Sheriff and they will contact someone from ODFW.

If you do observe a fresh-dead deer or one in stress, do not go near it. Keep your pets, especially dogs, away from it.

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## Ore. unemployment rate ticks up slightly to 5.5 percent

SALEM (AP) — Oregon's unemployment rate ticked up slightly to 5.5 percent in June, even as the labor participation rate hit its lowest recorded level.

The seasonally adjusted jobless rate is up from 5.3 percent in May.

The Oregon Employment Department said Tuesday the uptick is not a surprise because Oregon's unemployment rate has consistently gone up during

summer months since the Great Recession. The trend is typically driven by an influx of recent graduates, students on summer break and people moving to Oregon.

A year ago, unemployment for June was at 7 percent.

The labor participation rate was at 60.3 percent, its lowest level since comparable figures were first recorded in 1976. State officials say the drop mirrors a national trend as older workers retire.

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