

WILD: Best policy is to let Mother Nature take care of business

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environment and its parents,” said Julia Burco, ODFW district wildlife veterinarian.

“Never assume a young animal is orphaned unless you saw its parent killed,” continued Burco. “In almost all cases, the parent will return once it is safe to do so, like when people and dogs aren’t around.”

If an animal is injured, or truly orphaned, it needs special care. Oregon’s licensed wildlife rehabilitators have the knowledge and facilities to provide this care. They use special methods that limit human interaction and mimic the animal’s natural lifestyle as much as possible, so the animal can eventually be returned to the wild.

Before picking up any wild animal, call ODFW, Oregon State Police, or a wildlife rehabilitator for advice. Removing or “capturing” an animal from the wild and keeping it in captivity without a permit is against state law (OAR 635-044-0015), as is transporting many animals. Last year, seven people were cited for doing so (No wildlife holding permit/Take-hold young game mammal).

Follow these tips if you encounter young animals in the wild:

Deer, elk and other mammals:

- Never assume an animal

is orphaned. Don’t move it from the forest, or from your backyard. Female deer and elk and other mammals will often leave their young temporarily for safety reasons or to feed elsewhere. They will return when it is safe to do so (when people, dogs, or predators are not present).

- Call your local ODFW office, Oregon State Police office, or a local licensed wildlife rehabilitation center when: You see an animal that you know is orphaned because you observed the dead parent animal; or the parent hasn’t returned for several hours or even up to a day; or if the animal is clearly injured or in distress.

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Never assume a young animal is orphaned unless you saw its parent killed.

— Julia Burco, ODFW

- Bunnies are rarely orphaned; mother rabbits only visit den sites at dusk and dawn to feed her young.

- Keep your dog or cat away from young wildlife, especially in the spring.

- Leave fledgling birds alone. It is natural for fledgling (mostly feathered) birds to be awkward while learning how to fly. If you see one on the ground, leave it alone and keep your distance.

Bring your pets under control and indoors if possible. The mother bird will feed it for several days on the ground until it “gets its wings.”

- Return nestling birds to the nest. Nestlings (baby birds not fully feathered) found on the ground can be gently and quickly returned to the nest. If the nest is out of reach, place the bird on an elevated branch or fence, or in a nest made from a small box, out of the reach of children and pets. Leave the area so the parent birds can return.

- Bring your pets indoors. Cats are a major cause of injury and death for all birds, killing millions of birds in the U.S. annually. Keep your pets away from fledgling birds learning to fly.

- Be careful when pruning trees as there may be a bird nest in the branch. Wait until birds are out of the nest.

- Beware of cavity nesters. Barn owls and other birds could be nesting in hollowed-out trees or logs and in haystacks.

- What if a bird flies into a window and appears hurt? Birds can be confused by reflective surfaces and mistakenly fly into windows. If you find a bird that has been stunned as a result of a window strike, put the bird in an uncovered box with a towel on the bottom. Keep it in a quiet place outside, away from pets, and check back in a couple of hours. If the bird has recovered, it will have flown off. If not, contact a local ODFW office or your local wildlife rehabilitator.

Camp Sherman to lose ‘scenic bikeway’?

The State Scenic Bikeway Advisory Committee voted to recommend the removal of the Metolius Loops Bikeway scenic bikeway designation at their April 28 meeting. The recommendation for designation removal has been forwarded to the State Parks and Recreation Commission in preparation for their vote on the matter at their June 29 meeting, slated to be held in the Salem area.

According to Alexandra Phillips, bicycle recreation specialist with the Oregon Parks & Recreation Department, “The State Scenic Bikeway Committee thanked the local proponents who had worked diligently for several years to find a solution to the inherent conflict between the existing Metolius River Corridor Plan that restricts promotion to protect the area, and the bikeway program whose main focus is promotion to attract cycle tourists.”

Removal of the designation does not prevent anyone from riding in the area.

“Cycling on the roads in Camp Sherman was legal before the bikeway designation and will remain so if

the designation is removed,” Phillips said.

The Metolius Loops was in the very first applications considered for scenic bikeway status, and was in the first round of state scenic bikeways designated in 2011.

State Parks and Recreation Department partners with Travel Oregon for promoting all the designated bikeways nationally and internationally, online and in print.

Part of the Metolius Loops route travels along a federally designated Wild and Scenic River. The Metolius River earned its Wild and Scenic designation in 1988 in part because of its primitive, historic character. After the federal Wild and Scenic designation a river corridor plan was written just for the Metolius.

“This plan is different than other Wild and Scenic River plans because each plan incorporates public comment and other issues, such as capacity,” Phillips noted. “The Metolius plan calls for protecting these important values by avoiding promotion and thus an increase in visitors.” Despite efforts at a solution, none could be identified.

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