



PHOTO BY DOUGLAS BEALL

The smallest falcon, the Merlin (*Falco columbarius*)

## Sisters Country birds

By Douglas Beall  
Correspondent

The smallest falcon, the Merlin (*Falco columbarius*), primarily hunts smaller birds while flying — flushing birds from thickets and chasing them using their amazing speed and maneuverability to catch their prey on the wing.

During their breeding season the Merlin inhabits open upland and lowland prairies. Merlins do not build their own nests; instead they use old stick nests built by hawks, magpies or crows. Occasionally they nest on ledges or tree cavities. The nest contains three to six brown eggs, which are incubated for 27

to 32 days.

The male provides all food for the brood and female until the young begin to fledge. The young leave the nest about a month after hatching and leave the area within five weeks to begin their adult life.

There are Merlins passing through Central Oregon now, as they will stop and hunt before heading south, although a few may remain in our area.

In the past the Merlin was called a pigeon hawk. Groups of Merlins are referred to as a “leash,” a “brace,” or an “illusion” of Merlins. For more Merlin photos visit <http://abirdsingsbecauseithasasong.com/recent-journeys>.



## Dear Property Guy

By Mike Zoormajian

*Dear Property Guy, I live in downtown Sisters and recently cut down some sick trees near my house. A neighbor advised that I needed a permit to cut trees. I told her to get off my lawn and to mind her own business, but now I'm curious what the real deal is.*

— Sisters Lumberjack

Dear Jack:

Property Guy is happy to help with your trees, but has nothing to offer as far as your neighbor goes.

This question is so far out of Property Guy's world, I had to go to my local expert. I contacted my friend, Sisters City Manager Corey Misley, who was super helpful in getting me smart on the subject.

I learned that many cities in Oregon require permits to cut trees of a certain diameter even on private property. But Sisters currently isn't one of them. That said, Sisters may take up a potential code amendment regarding larger trees in the future.

Problems (and hefty fines) have arisen when people have cut trees that appear to be on private property, but are actually on City property or right-of-way. So best to check in with the city and get something in writing before

## Check before you cut trees

engaging in any cutting or significant trimming

“Preserving our urban forest is part of what has made Sisters a special place,” said Corey. “We have City staff who can help with the review process.”

But wait there's more... If there is a development application or building permit outstanding, the city does regulate tree removal and can require replacement of trees at a 3:1 ratio. So if you're removing trees as part of a new build or addition, you'll need to work through the city.

So long story short: You were cool in your scenario. Trees = Good. More trees = Better. Cutting your own trees = Good. Cutting trees on city property = Bad. Check in with City first and everything should be fine.

— Mike

Dear Property Guy:

*A tenant we really, really liked just exited our rental in Bend. They left the house in perfect condition except for some deeply scratched areas from their dog on the*

*a couple sections of wood floor. We want to be fair, and want future tenants to be able to have pets, but it's going to be pretty expensive to repair.*

— Doggie Landlord

Dear Dogs:

You got a couple issues here. The tenants are legally liable for damage above “normal wear and tear.” So let your conscience be your guide here.

I generally advise my clients that doggies and wood floors don't mix. Especially if it's a soft wood. If you want to continue to rent to pet owners, I'd advise covering the real wood floor with an engineered product to save the natural wood. Then uncover and repair the wood when it comes time to sell.

— Mike

*Mike Zoormajian is principal at WetDog Properties in Sisters. Providing local property management and investor services. Questions, comments to [letters@wetdogpnw.com](mailto:letters@wetdogpnw.com). Free legal advice is worth what you pay. Consult an attorney before doing anything crazy.*

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## SUDOKU SOLUTION

for puzzle on page 20

6	5	4	3	9	7	8	2	1
1	9	2	6	5	8	3	7	4
7	8	3	4	2	1	6	9	5
3	7	5	8	6	9	4	1	2
8	1	9	2	7	4	5	3	6
2	4	6	5	1	3	9	8	7
9	6	8	7	4	2	1	5	3
5	2	1	9	3	6	7	4	8
4	3	7	1	8	5	2	6	9

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