

ODFW warns people to leave baby animals alone

EO Media Group

SALEM — Officials from the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) have issued their annual reminder to people to leave deer fawns, elk calves and other young wild animals alone rather than try to “rescue” them.

These babies are rarely actually abandoned, according to ODFW.

In most cases the mother is out foraging or is nearby and will return.

In the rare cases when a person actually sees the parent killed, or if the young animal is injured, ODFW recommends calling the agency, the Oregon State Police or a licensed wildlife rehabilitator.

Each year during spring, ODFW offices receive an influx of calls from people who picked up a fawn, calf, fledgling bird or other young animal, believing it had been abandoned or orphaned.

When these animals are taken out of their natural habitat, they can miss the chance to learn how to avoid predators, forage or hunt for food, and other vital skills, according to ODFW.

Because of the damage it can do to both wildlife



Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife

A mule deer fawn follows its mother into the underbrush.

and people, removing an animal from the wild is illegal under Oregon wildlife laws, specifically ORS 487.308.

Agency officials also urge people to keep pets and other domestic animals away from wildlife.

Deer and elk

Oregon’s deer and elk give birth from May through July. It’s natural for mother animals to leave their young alone and hidden for extended periods of time while they go off to feed, so never assume a young animal is orphaned when you see it alone. The mother will return when it’s safe to do so — when people, pets or predators aren’t around.

Deer and elk see dogs as a threat to their young so may act aggressively in response to disturbance from a dog.

Birds

Some baby birds, called fledglings, may become separated from their parents as they learn to fly. These are sometimes mistaken as abandoned birds. Unless obviously injured, fledglings should be left where they are or lifted carefully back into the nest or onto a branch to avoid predators, so they have the best chance at survival.

Ducklings and goslings frequently become separated from their mothers due to disturbance from

humans or predators. If you spot young waterfowl without a mother, please leave them alone and leave the area so the mother can return.

With the recent detections of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) in Oregon, it is more important than ever to avoid close contact with waterfowl (ducks and geese) this spring and summer. Do not feed ducks and geese. Feeding congregates susceptible birds and enables the disease to spread between birds more easily. Also, note that Oregon’s wildlife rehabilitators are not currently accepting sick ducks and geese to protect other avian patients and education birds in their care.

Marine mammals

The advice to leave animals in the wild applies to all wildlife — including adult and young marine mammals that are commonly seen alone resting on rocks or the beach in spring and summer. Beachgoers should stay away from resting seals and sea lions and keep dogs away from these animals as well. Marine mammal strandings should be reported to OSP’s hotline at 1-800-452-7888.



Tom Claycomb/Contributed Photo

The camp cook is going to get fired. Sardines, vanilla wafers and peanut butter is a prison-diet meal.

HUNT

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But despite the low numbers, I did get enough shooting to make it fun so I’d highly recommend you go this week. Due to the ammo shortages/exorbitant prices the last couple of years hunting with airguns is the perfect way to go and almost makes the Umarex slogan, 2022, The Year of The Airgun, prophetic!

If you’re a kid on a paper route budget all you need is an airgun and a tin of pellets. But like all of our outdoor endeavors, if you can afford them, these items will enhance the hunt and make you more successful. Here’s some gear I’d recommend.

Airguns

On this hunt I took the Umarex .25 caliber Gauntlet and .22 caliber Origin. I like PCP airguns but they are more expensive and complicated. The cheapest airguns to shoot are the break barrels. I have a Ruger Blackhawk. I’d recommend using a .22 or the .25 is even better. The .177 doesn’t have as much whoomph.

Optics

A lot of airguns come with a scope. My Origin didn’t so I put a Burreis Droptine 4.5-14x on it. I like higher magnification because you’ll be shooting small game. Make sure your scope is airgun compatible. Spring action break

barrels can be tough on scopes. You’ll want binoculars to help find the little prairie rats. I like 10x binoculars.

Miscellaneous gear

- You’ll want a bipod to shoot off of. I use the Bog Adrenaline. If you’re a kid, get two half-inch dowel rods and tape them together six inches from one end and spread them out to shoot off of.

- Take a pad to sit on. Or better yet a lightweight backpacking chair so you’re elevated and can see over the brush.

- All pellets are not created equal. I’ve tested a million brands and JSB are the most accurate. Check out their Hades or Knock-Out pellets. Or their Diabolo Dome shaped pellets work great too.

And lastly, while you’re out in the high desert country, slow down and enjoy your surroundings. I saw a boatload of white-faced ibis on this hunt. One time my 87-year-old buddy Roy shot a whistle pig. I was watching through my binoculars and said you got him. About that time a hawk swooped down and snatched him up so I corrected myself and said “You had one!”

Once a badger ran out and grabbed one. Badgers are beautiful but they’re the Mike Tyson of the high desert. Stay away from them.

Now’s the perfect time to grab an airgun and get out and enjoy nature. Have fun.

TURKEYS

Continued from Page B1

What appeared to be jet-black body feathers shone marvelous emerald, ruby, and bronze when rolled in the orange glow of the evening sun. His beard was twice the circumference and immaculately full compared to the other toms I had been watching. His spurs were short, only a half-inch or so, but as big around as a dime. His tail fan and rump feathers were

flawless, possibly because he was a younger bird who avoided tussles with the older toms.

“I’m going to pretend that bird came to my calling,” I mentioned to my buddy Dean, who had filmed the hunt, knowing that the screeching from the box call would likely have cost me that bird had it been later in the season. Had I not called at all, it’s a safe bet that his evening routine would have brought him to me regardless.

I had watched this

flock from the point of a lower ridge for two days and knew where and how they moved. The flock was roosting and sheltering in the canyon conifers and traveling the logging road morning, noon, and night. Thirteen toms were visible from my vantage and the seven that called that canyon home would take turns strutting in pairs in the opening at the end of the logging road. I set my hen decoy at the mouth of the road and slipped in behind the brush pile 30

yards adjacent while the birds loafed in the timber. It was a slam dunk.

Whether you are new to the game of gobblers or you have mastered sweet-talking the wisest old toms, scouting and patterning Rios can be an ace in the hole for bagging spring long-beards in the Blues.

■ Brad Trumbo is a fish and wildlife biologist and outdoor writer in Waitsburg, Washington. For tips and tales of outdoor pursuits and conservation, visit www.bradtrumbo.com.

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SATURDAY, MAY 21, 2022

CROSSWORD PUZZLER

ACROSS

- Water barrier
- Remove tangles
- Get better
- Yale grad
- Emmy relative
- Basilica part
- Fix a tooth
- Un, in the USA
- Majors and Remick
- Wild goat
- Meadow sound
- Mitten parts
- Sultry — West
- Barn topper
- Sporty sock
- Come to the rescue
- French Legion headgear
- Wide st.
- Grasshopper
- Osiris’ sister
- Fortune 500 abbr.

DOWN

- Phone trio
- Boxing’s greatest
- A thousand G’s
- Denver’s st.
- Reed instruments
- Glass container
- In the company of
- Prod
- Hard to come by
- “Star Wars” rogue
- Comfy shoes
- Eden evictee
- Deadlocked
- No longer fashionable
- Lugosi of horror flicks
- Screen
- Pilot a ferry

Answer to Previous Puzzle

B	A	N	W	H	Y	S	L	I	R	E	
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