

Stop the fawn-napping:

ODFW reminds people to not pick up fawns or other young wildlife

Picking up a newborn fawn all by itself in the wild and taking it home to care for it might seem like the right thing to do. But ODFW wildlife biologists call it "fawn-napping"—and OSP calls it a violation of wildlife laws, which prohibit taking animals out of the wild, transporting them or keeping them at home.

Across Oregon, ODFW district offices and wildlife rehabilitators say they have fielded dozens of calls in recent weeks urging people to think first and not pick up fawns (or elk calves, baby seals, cougar or bobcat kittens, bear cubs, fledgling birds, or other young wildlife born in spring.) In several cases, people have been advised to put fawns back where they found them. A few fawns have gone to a licensed wildlife rehabilitator.

One fawn had to be euthanized due to malnutrition and its overall poor condition.

Western Oregon's black-tailed deer give birth in early June. Similar to many wild species, they will leave newborn fawns alone for several hours or even the better part of a day while off foraging. They will return to collect their fawn and feed it, provided they sense no danger.

"Never assume a fawn or other young animal found hiding, standing or wandering alone in the wild is orphaned," says Herman Biederbeck, ODFW district wildlife biologist in Tillamook. "Give young wildlife a wide berth and leave them alone. The parent animal will return to collect their offspring when humans aren't around and they feel safe."

"Only if you see the parent animal dead should you assume a young animal is orphaned," he continued. "Then call ODFW, OSP or a wildlife rehabilitator to get guidance and assistance on what to do with the animal before you touch it."

Most fawns collected by good Samaritans this time of year are not orphaned, and removing them from the wild complicates their chances for survival and a long life in the wild. These fawns will miss the chance to learn important survival skills from their parent like where to feed, what to eat, how to behave as part of a group and how to escape from predators.

"Nothing humans do can substitute for the natural learning experience life in the wild provides," says Colin Gillin, ODFW wildlife veterinarian. "Research has shown that rehabilitated fawns have lower survival than their wild-raised counterparts. The fawns that have the best chance of a long life learn life skills from a parent animal."

However, fawns that are truly orphaned and picked up in the first week or two of life will only survive under the care of a licensed wildlife rehabilitator with specialized knowledge and facilities to provide appropriate care. Rehabilitators working with fawns and other wildlife try to use methods that limit human interaction and mimic the animal's natural lifestyle as much as possible, so the animal has the best chance of survival when returned to the wild.

ODFW has also been successful in placing known orphaned week-old fawns with wild foster does that have similar-aged offspring. Under the right circumstances, mother does will foster fawns that aren't their own. ODFW veterinarians have found that later in the summer as the fawns get older in age, it becomes more difficult to integrate the animal into established doe/fawn groups, particularly fawns that have been held by humans and are habituated and lack normal fawn behaviors. Biologists have also observed that older fawns that become orphaned in late summer have learned enough skills from their parent animal to survive their first winter and become a wild and vital part of Oregon's wildlife community.

High water temps stressful on fish, says ODFW

Summer conditions have come early to Oregon, and in many places fish like trout, salmon, steelhead and sturgeon are struggling with low water levels and high water temperatures.

"Normally we see these kinds of conditions later in the summer, not in late June and early July," said Rick Hargrave, ODFW Information and Education Division Administrator. In response, the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife is asking anglers to take precautions when fishing during these drought conditions.

"When streams get too warm, fish are stressed, and as a result the fishing goes downhill fast," said Rick Hargrave, ODFW Information and Education Division Administrator. "Fish stop biting or retreat to deeper, cooler water where they are harder to catch."

On days when temperatures soar, anglers can do their part to reduce the stress fish are under. Hargrave recommends the following when fishing in waters that include native fish you intend to release:

Fish early in day when water temperatures are cooler.

Use a thermometer to check water temperatures frequently. Stop fishing when temperatures exceed 70 degrees.

Look for trout in deep, high elevation lakes or shaded streams near headwaters. These places are often cooler.

Use barbless hooks so you can release fish easily.

Use the appropriate gear and land fish quickly. The longer the fight, the less likely the fish will survive.

Keep the fish in the water when you unhook it and cradle the fish upright until it revives enough to swim away.

Use your judgment. If conditions where you want to fish seems especially severe (low, hot water), consider fishing somewhere else where water conditions are better.

Check the regulation update pages on the ODFW website before you head out to make sure temporary emergency regulations have not been put in place for the waters you want to fish.

"If drought conditions continue, it's possible we may have to close or restrict some fisheries in order to protect fish," Hargrave said.

Offbeat Oregon History

Rosecrans rescue one of Coast Guard's finest hours

BY FINN J.D. JOHN
For the Sentinel

In any great disaster, it's always possible to find one or two pivot points at which a key decision made disaster all but inevitable.

In the wreck of the tanker steamship S.S. Rosecrans, there were several of these; most great disasters come at the end of a chain of unlucky breaks, and this was no exception. And there's a great deal that can't ever be known, since none of the ship's officers survived.

But a strong case can be made that the Rosecrans' doom was ensured by the catastrophic fire that had gutted the ship six months previously, in California.

That experience seems to have made the Rosecrans' captain, Lucien Johnson, extremely worried about the risk of fire — unreasonably so. So much so that when the radio operator started transmitting SOS calls, Johnson ordered him to stop, for fear that the bright blue spark from the transmitter would catch some stray fumes from the hold and set the cargo ablaze. (Remember, this was in the midst of a 60-knot gale.) And the ship never launched a single distress flare — most likely because Captain Johnson wouldn't allow any pyrotechnic risks.

As a result, when the Rosecrans struck the sand and the breakers doused her engines, she was left helpless and invisible and silent in the blackness, without even enough steam to blow her whistle.

And no one knew where she was.

Legendary Point Adams Lifestation Keeper Oscar Wicklund later testified that, had the lifesavers known where the Rosecrans was stranded, the entire crew would likely have been saved with relative ease within a few hours.

What happened instead was one of the worst maritime disasters of Oregon history, and one of the most spectacular rescue performances in the history of the U.S. Coast Guard (or U.S. Lifesaving Service, as it was then called).

The wireless operator in Astoria had told Wicklund the wreck had likely happened on Clatsop Spit on the Oregon side of the river; so he sent a patrol out on the beach to look, launched his new gasoline-powered motor lifeboat and hurried out to look for the ship while the tide was still slack. On the way he met up with a tugboat, the Tatoosh, and the two vessels hunted all across the storm-swept bar with no luck.

As the tide started coming in, Wicklund and his boat returned to the station. It was then, around

8:40 a.m., that he learned that the Rosecrans was a mile and a half out to sea, at the end of Peacock Spit. He'd spent the hours before dawn thoroughly searching the wrong side of the river. The lookout in the tower at Cape Disappointment had spotted the wreck shortly after dawn.

Wicklund rushed across the river to help. Once there, he joined the crew of Cape Disappointment Lifestation Keeper Alfred Rimer, who commanded another of the new gasoline-powered motor lifeboats, and they set out together for the scene of the wreck.

Both crews were equipped with the doughty 34-foot "Merryman" type motor lifeboats, which had been developed just a few years before by installing gasoline engines in the standard self-bailing, self-righting rescue lifeboats of the day. They were the state of the art in 1912; but their primitive engines — massive 414-cubic-inch four-cylinder jobs built by Holmes Motor Co., rated at 25 horsepower — weren't powerful enough to

muscle the 11,000-pound rescue boats across the bar against the combined fury of the gale and a strong flood tide.

By now the sun was up, though, and the rescuers could see the Rosecrans — or what remained of it.

"All that could be seen of the wreck was the mast sticking up

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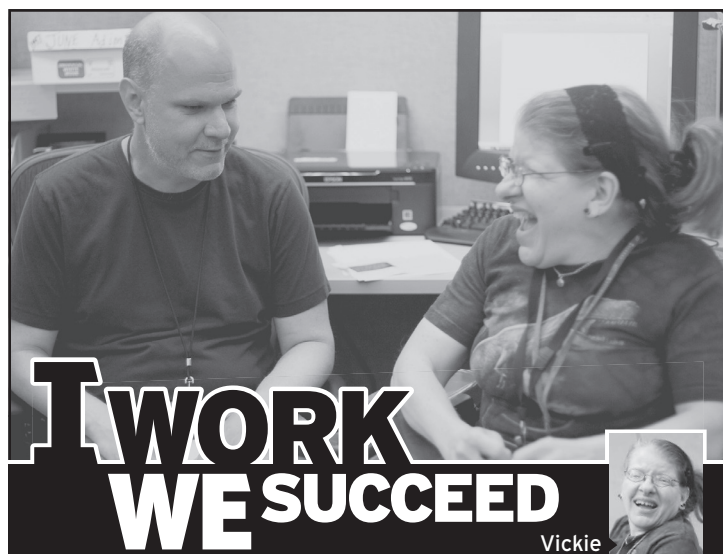
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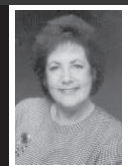
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