

In the News

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Grizzly attacks hiker

After a hiker was found dead in Yellowstone National Park, park officials captured a female grizzly bear (*Ursus arctos*) suspected of the attack, according to the National Park Service (NPS). Evidence at the scene indicated that the female grizzly had cubs with her at the time of the attack. Tests on DNA samples confirmed the identity of the female bear as the one who attacked the hiker, and the bear was euthanized. The NPS urges hikers to travel in groups and to take precautions against bear encounters, such as making noise while hiking and carrying pepper spray.

Turkeys chase golfers: no birdies today

A pair of young, male eastern wild turkeys (*Meleagris gallopavo silvestris*) have been causing problems for King's Forest Golf Course in Ontario, Canada, *The Hamilton Spectator* reported. Golfers reported turkeys chasing them, blocking shots, and jumping in the back of golf carts. The course did not have problems with turkeys until recently. The problem started when golfers began feeding the birds. The wild turkey was hunted to near extinction before the early 1900s, but the species has made a dramatic comeback in recent decades. As turkeys get more abundant and human populations continue to expand, encounters between the two will likely become more prevalent.

Deer break into flower shop

As the owners of a flower shop in Luzern County, Pennsylvania, locked up their store and headed home for the evening, 2 white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*) smashed through the front window and trashed the shop's back room and showroom, according to the local *Times Leader* (2015). The deer made their exit by smashing through a different window and hastily fleeing the scene.

Rabid raccoon attacks woman

While a woman in Maryland was cleaning her car, a raccoon (*Procyon lotor*; Figure 1) jumped from nearby bushes and bit her several times, *The Star* reported. The raccoon was killed and sent to the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene's rabies laboratory where it tested positive for rabies. The woman was preemptively treated for the disease. Other



Figure 1. Raccoon (*Procyon lotor*; photo courtesy J. Caudell)

raccoon attacks were reported in the same area the following day. The USDA Wildlife Services works to contain the spread of rabies through the National Rabies Management Program, which distributes oral rabies vaccines to animals in areas where rabies is prevalent. The program has been active since 1995.

Love is in the air ... and on the ground

Students taking summer classes at the New Mexico State University had to pay attention to more than just their studies, recently. A breeding pair of Swainson's hawks (*Buteo swainsoni*; Figure 2) took up residence on the campus during the summer and acted aggressively toward students walking past their nest, according to *Las Cruces Sun-News* (2015). The Campus Health Center reported treating about a dozen patients with injuries from raptor attacks. Swainson's hawks are not known to be aggressive except when raising young.



Figure 2. Swainson's hawk (*Buteo swainsoni*; photo by J. and K. Hollingsworth, courtesy U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service)

The raptors migrate to Argentina in the winter and are protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, which prohibits disturbing the birds while nesting.

Birds are not the only animals that can be dangerous when amorous. Changes in temperature in the early fall often are a sign that



Figure 3. Rocky Mountain elk (*Cervus canadensis*; photo courtesy J. Caudell)

Rocky Mountain elk (*Cervus canadensis*) are beginning their rut. While we often picture these majestic animals in our national parks, they can also be found in cities and towns, such as Estes Park, Colorado. According to the Estes Park News, bugling elk are gathering their harems and beginning their annual display of affection. People are warned not to get too close and watch for elk that appear to be jumpy, because this behavior can be a sign that elk may attack. In 1 recorded incident, (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CiOasFe6dzk>), a buck charged an overly ambitious amateur photographer trying to get closer for photographs. Barking dogs also can cause elk to charge, as the ungulates work to protect their harem from predators.

Eagle attacks drone

An Australian man's unmanned aerial vehicle (drone) was damaged when it was swatted out of the sky by a wedge-tailed eagle (*Aquila audax*) as the man guided the machine over a wooded area near his home in Melbourne, Australia, *The Guardian* reported. Wedge-tailed eagles are known to be territorial and have attacked other aerial vehicles, such as helicopters and paragliders. Animals attacking drones that get too close is not a new phenomenon. An eastern grey kangaroo (*Macropus giganteus*) in Australia and a chimpanzee (*Pan troglodytes*) in a Dutch zoo each damaged a drone that was recording them. The National Park Service in 2014 banned the flying of drones over national parks, because of their potential to disturb wildlife. Debate over the use of drones continues in the United States, due to both to privacy and safety

concerns when drones are operated in or near airports. Despite drones' potential hazards, however, they have been useful tools for wildlife professionals to manage wildlife, because they are less stressful to most wildlife than typical manned aircraft (Martin 2014). Researchers in Kenya are using drones to scare away elephants from villages where they would be victims of poaching (Schiffman 2014). Elephants associate the whirring sounds of drone blades with bees, causing them to run.

Hogs tear up football field

Players of a Houston, Texas, high school football team got a surprise when they showed

up for practice, only to find their field destroyed by overnight rooting of wild hogs (*Sus scrofa*; Figure 4). The hogs dug wallows in the field to escape the summer heat. According to Giuliano (2013), wild hogs actively seek out wet areas during hot weather, because they lack efficient external cooling ability. With their wallowing and rooting style of feeding, wild hogs cause >\$1.5 billion in damage to crops and personal property annually.



Figure 4. Wild hog (*Sus scrofa*; photo courtesy J. Caudell)

Literature cited

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