

In the News

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Downtown New Jersey Bear Sightings Increase

Wooded areas of New Jersey, USA, are seeing an increase in mature black bears (*Ursus americanus*; Figure 1), resulting in juvenile bears more frequently venturing further into human-populated areas, including downtowns and suburbs. *The New Jersey Herald* reported 2 human injuries from bear encounters in the area, which were not life-threatening, though several reports of bears killing pet dogs (*Canis lupus familiaris*) have also been noted. Black bear numbers in the state continue to increase due to higher birth rates than other populations as well as minimal population control, with bear hunting becoming prohibited on state-owned lands. In lieu of implementing a revised bear management plan approved by the Fish and Game Council, New Jersey’s governor added \$1.5 million to state budgets to enhance public education and resources through the Division of Fish and Wildlife.



Figure 1. Black bear (*Ursus americanus*; photo by Mike W. Matthews).

Wild Boar Bites Woman at Spanish Beach

Beachgoers on a Costa del Sol beach near Benidorm, Spain, were surprised by a wild boar (*Sus scrofa*) that emerged from the water,

according to *The New York Post*. The boar, believed to have originated from nearby Serra Gelada Natural Park, ran out of the sea, with lifeguards sounding an alarm. The boar bit a 67-year-old woman on the leg when they collided, and she was treated for minor injuries. Lifeguards chased the animal away, but its whereabouts after the incident were unknown. Wild boars in the area have increased during the past few years, as the species frequently forages for food in cities and tourist destinations.

Elk Calf Rescued from New Mexico Blaze

During calving season, a newborn elk (*Cervus canadensis*) calf was rescued from the ashes of a raging wildfire. *The Hill* reported that a New Mexico, USA, firefighter discovered the calf in a forested area as he worked to patrol and extinguish wildfire hot spots. The firefighter questioned whether the calf was alive and searched for traces of its mother, which may have been foraging at a distance. Considered abandoned, the aptly named “Cinder” was taken to a nearby ranch and eventually made its way to a wildlife rehabilitation center in Espanola, New Mexico. The calf was paired with a surrogate elk to minimize human contact so it can be released back into the wild.

California Dog and Woman Protect Each Other from Mountain Lion

A hiker in northern California, USA, while on a trail adventure with her Belgian Malinois dog (*Canis lupus familiaris*), encountered a mountain lion (*Puma concolor*; Figure 2) that immediately struck and swiped at them on the path. Without hesitation, the dog fought against the mountain lion to protect the woman, who tried to deter the big cat with sticks and rocks. She flagged down a passerby for help, and the two

humans suffered non-life-threatening injuries while attempting to yell and hit the lion until it released the dog, which was badly injured. The *Los Angeles Times* stated the brave canine had multiple head injuries, including skull fractures and a swollen eye, but is expected to recover. Mountain lion attacks are rare in California, but wildlife officials say it is important for people to be aware of what to do if encountering a mountain lion.



Figure 2. Cougar (*Puma concolor*; photo by Mike W. Matthews).

Drone Fishing in Hawaii a Controversial Topic

The fishing community in Hawaii, USA, is split on a measure to ban the use of drones in fishing, according to *Hawaii News Now*. The state measure purports to address the over-fishing that the state Department of Natural Resources claims is devastating marine life. An advantage of drone fishing is the use of modern technology that allows anglers to go beyond their previous boundaries, which supporters say can be done safely. However, drones allow anglers to extend their lines to reach far into the ocean, which opponents say will increase the likelihood of fishing lines being broken and lost offshore and killing wildlife, including protected species.

Arizona Javelina Gets Trapped in Car with Snack

The Yavapai County Sheriff's Office near Cornville, Arizona, USA, was called due to an unusual car bandit. *NBC News* reported that a javelina (*Tayassuidae*), also known as peccary or skunk pig, had crawled into a Subaru station wagon with a hatchback that was left open overnight and had gotten into a bag of Cheetos

in the vehicle. When the hatch closed, the animal was trapped overnight. After licking the Cheetos bag clean, the javelina attempted to escape, tearing up part of the passenger door and dashboard. It managed to shift the car into neutral, causing the vehicle to roll across the street. No one was injured, and the animal was safely returned to the wild.

Kindergarten Class Assists with Turtle Conservation

Eighteen orphaned diamondback terrapin turtles (*Malaclemys terrapin*; Figure 3) were rescued, raised, and released back into a marsh, thanks to a kindergarten class in Stone Harbor, New Jersey, USA. Their educational program, which has been in place for >20 years, involves children taking care of the turtles from the beginning to end of their school year, even selling cookies to fundraise for turtle conservation, according to *National Public Radio*. The orphaned turtles are harvested as eggs in situations where the mother is killed near shores where nesting occurs. Because hundreds of turtles are killed each year on New Jersey roads, the program aims to help with species conservation while educating and empowering the next generation of turtle lovers.



Figure 3. Diamondback terrapin turtle (*Malaclemys terrapin*; photo courtesy of U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service).

Disclaimer: The findings and conclusions in this article are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the views of Utah State University or the Jack H. Berryman Institute.

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