



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

County Reminds Everyone to ‘Keep Wildlife Wild’, Stay Safe

July 24, 2017—**Clear Creek County Communications, Colo.** – The Clear Creek County Public & Environmental Health Team is reminding residents and visitors to the County to keep safe by not picking up or keeping wild animals for pets.

“Every year when the weather warms up, kids are out of school, summer camps are in full swing and people are enjoying the amenities our County offers, we get calls regarding people interacting with wildlife,” said Charlotte Hampson, Environmental Health Manager. “We recently had a family try and do a good deed by taking in a baby raccoon. Unfortunately, due to the potential for rabies the animal had to be turned over to Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) where ultimately those animals get put down due to the inability to rehabilitate them. The best way to protect yourself and wildlife is to leave them alone,” she added.

According to the Mayo Clinic, “...Animals most likely to transmit rabies in the United States include bats, coyotes, foxes, raccoons and skunks. Once a person begins showing signs and symptoms of rabies, the disease is nearly always fatal...”

“Bats are also an issue around the County, especially for campers or people living in housing structures that aren’t well-sealed and insulated,” said Cindy Dicken, County Health & Human Services Director. “A bat can squeeze into a crack just ½” in diameter, and can bite you while you are sleeping or without you knowing,” she added. According to the Centers for Disease Control, bats also are a main carrier of rabies. <https://www.cdc.gov/features/bats/index.html>

And it’s not just raccoons or bats that can carry disease or cause problems. Many cases around the state stem from people feeding deer, elk, and other wildlife only to have the animals confront or attack them. For example, according to the CPW website, a 75-year old woman in Kansas was gored, trampled and killed by the 200-pound buck she had raised for nearly eight years.

“People are often fascinated with the notion of taking in a hurt animal, nursing it back to health, or just ‘adopting’ a wild animal because they think it’s fun and different,” said Hampson. “The truth is that wild rabbit or squirrel could cause great harm to them, their family and their domesticated family pets.”

“It is illegal to own wildlife in Colorado...and you cannot remove a wild animal from the woods and take it home,” according to CPW.

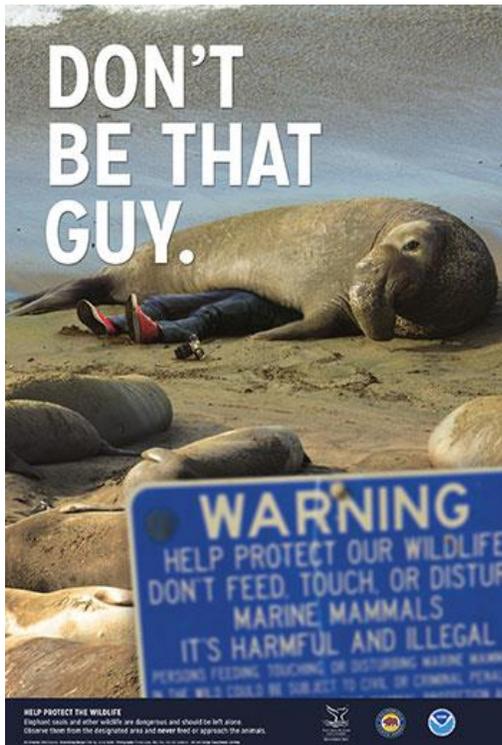
For more information:

<https://www.cdc.gov/>

<http://cpw.state.co.us/learn/Pages/LivingwithWildlifeDontDomesticate.aspx>

<http://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/rabies/home/ovc-20263325>

<https://www.fws.gov/news/blog/index.cfm/2015/1/15/Keep-the-Wild-in-Wildlife-Dont-Touch-or-Feed>



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Clear Creek County Official Website: <http://www.co.clear-creek.co.us/>

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