

ANIMAL RESCUES THAT GO BAD



Tips from the Posse

By Mark Rackay

People who spend time in the great outdoors often encounter animals in need of rescue. Most have good intentions but rarely possess the tools or skills necessary to carry out such rescues. However, when faced with an animal in need, we tend to do our best to help, sometimes putting ourselves in danger.

A trapped animal, like one caught in a fence, doesn't understand what's happening. Their system is pumping with adrenaline, they may be injured, and they're scared, aware they're vulnerable to predators. You come along, ready to help, but the animal doesn't realize it and may lash out.

This scenario plays out daily in the wild, and often, people trying to



I once found a pelican, wrapped hopelessly in fish line, and with a hook stuck in his beak. I was able to free the poor beast, and before he left my boat, he bit me in recognition of my service. (Photo courtesy of wikimediacommons/Korall)

help get hurt. My first experience with a sick animal occurred when I was about six. A sickly raccoon wandered into the yard, spinning in circles and falling. My grandfather advised everyone to leave it alone, but my aunt ignored him, wrapping the raccoon in a blanket to bring it inside.

The raccoon, however, regained enough strength to claw and bite her arm severely.

The raccoon later tested positive for distemper, explaining its behavior, and my aunt received stitches for her efforts. She learned the hard way that even well-meaning actions can result in injury.

Recently, two men in South Dakota risked their safety to free a pronghorn trapped in barbed wire. As they freed it, the pronghorn sprinted off, carrying one man's shoe on its horn, which later fell off. Luckily, the men weren't hurt.

In Iraq, wildlife conservationists rescued six Syrian brown bears from captivity and planned to release them into the wild. However, the bears charged the crowd after being released, scattering onlookers. This wasn't the first time such an event ended this way, as a prior release also saw bears charging the crowd.

Many may recall the story of a bear that broke into a campsite and

consumed 36 cans of beer before passing out. Fortunately, the campers were gone when the bear awoke with a hangover.

Another story involves a Vermont hiker, Kris Rowley, who was followed by a bear. In a panic, Rowley threw her iPhone at the bear, which became distracted by the phone, allowing her to escape. She later returned to find the phone damaged, but the bear was gone. Unfortunately,

Apple didn't accept her "bear ate my iPhone" story for a warranty claim.

I've spent over 50 years in the wild and have encountered many distressed animals. Despite rescuing pelicans, deer, and even a pygmy rattlesnake, none ever showed gratitude. In fact, every rescued animal tried to bite, kick or stab me afterward.

I still feel it's my duty to help animals in distress, but I often remember my grandfather's advice: Leave him alone. Perhaps he, too, grew tired of the thankless bites and scratches.

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Colorado Snowmobile Grant Program to provide over \$1 million for winter trail grooming, equipment and maintenance

SPECIAL TO THE PRESS

The Colorado Parks and Wildlife Snowmobile Grant Program will provide over \$1 million dollars to support winter trails in Colorado this year. Over \$350,000 was approved by the Parks and Wildlife Commission for Snowmobile Grant Program projects and an additional \$735,000 was provided for the Trail Grooming program to maintain winter trail opportunities.

Despite its name, the Snowmobile Grant Program supports trail grooming for winter trails that are open to both motorized and non-motorized use such as cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, and fat biking.

CPW offers two types of winter trail grants each year.

Snowmobile Program grants are distributed through a competitive application process for large projects to maintain and purchase new equipment and maintain and build new winter trails and trail facilities. This year, snowmobile grants will fund five volunteer snowmobile clubs to purchase grooming equipment and repair existing groomers.

Trail Grooming grant funds are primarily directed toward winter trail grooming, maintenance and signage. The Trail Grooming program currently supports 27 volunteer snowmobile clubs that maintain and provide signage on over 2700 miles of winter trails.



Money raised from snowmobile registration fees is used to purchase trail grooming equipment to help maintain thousands of miles of winter trails. Photo courtesy of Ross Muzic.

The majority of funding for the Snowmobile Program comes from snowmobile registration and permitting fees with close to 25% of funding coming from the Recreational Trails Program (RTP). The RTP is a federally funded grant program that receives money from a portion of the federal gas taxes paid on non-highway recreational fuel.

"When you register your snowmobile or buy a permit, you are helping to fund the winter trails that you enjoy," said CPW Assistant Director for Outdoor Recreation and Lands Fletcher Jacobs. "While it does support other winter trail activities, the Snowmobile Program's primary goal is to improve and enhance snowmobile rec-

reation opportunities across the state while promoting the safe and responsible use of snowmobiles."

In addition to trail grooming and signage for the snowmobiling public, registration/permit funding also supports registration operations, snowmobile law enforcement, the snowmobile safety certification program and Colorado's Avalanche Warning Program.

City, county, local and federal government entities and grooming clubs registered under the Colorado Snowmobile Associate (CSA) are eligible to apply for either a program grant or grooming services grant. The 2025-2026 snowmobile grant cycle will begin in March 2025.

Forest Service finalizes Mt. Emmons land exchange

SPECIAL TO THE PRESS

The Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre and Gunnison (GMUG) National Forests' Gunnison Ranger District, in coordination with the Mt. Emmons Mining Company, finalized the Mt. Emmons Land Exchange August 29, 2024.

The Forest Service exchanged 539 acres of federal land located adjacent to the Keystone Mine for 625 acres of land owned by Mt. Emmons Mining Company located in Gunnison and Saguache counties within the GMUG and Rio Grande National Forest.

The land exchange provides numerous benefits to the public, respects the conservation values of the local community and allows for efficient management of federal lands and resources.

The land exchange allows the Forest Ser-

vice to improve wildlife habitat and recreation opportunities by reducing private inholdings and creating more contiguous public land. The parcels acquired by the Forest Service include riparian and wet meadow habitats, which are vital to various bird and aquatic species.

Additional benefits of the land exchange include an established Conservation Easement and Mineral Extinguishment Agreement, prohibiting mining and allowing for non-motorized recreation in the future.

Furthermore, it allows Mt. Emmons Mining Company to address mining remediation efforts, including water quality and facilitated the transfer of ownership and administration of the Kebler Winter Trailhead to Gunnison County.

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