

In the News

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North Carolina man attacked in local park

While hiking in a local park in North Carolina, USA, a man was attacked by an unknown canine. According to a report by *The Free Lance-Star*, the animal walked within feet of the man, before attacking him from behind when the man turned to walk away. After a brief struggle, the man tried to take the animal back to a parking lot out of concern the animal had rabies but was only able to carry the animal a short distance before having to collect his breath and throw the animal into the brush along the trail. The man suffered multiple bites and was taken to a hospital to receive treatment for exposure to rabies. Three more individuals reported being chased or attacked by the animal, including 2 women who sought safety by jumping into a lake. Officials closed the areas around the attack sites to visitors and are attempting to capture the animal.

Pilot program for take of black vultures

Cattle (*Bos taurus*) ranchers in Missouri, USA will have a new tool to combat black vultures (*Coragyps atratus*; Figure 1) killing calves this year (2021): sub-permits issued by the Missouri Farm Bureau (MFB) authorizing lethal take. According to St. Louis Public Radio, the heart of the issue is the depredation of calves and cows who are particularly vulnerable during and immediately after, birth. Previously, only non-lethal deterrents could be employed to discourage depredation due to the protection of black vultures under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. Now, this pilot sub-permitting program, authorized by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, will allow some ranchers to kill black vultures in highly affected areas. According to an MFB press release, a farmer or rancher can be issued a sub-permit for up to 3 lethal takes. A similar pilot program is also ongoing in Kentucky and Tennessee, USA.



Figure 1. Black vulture (*Coragyps atratus*); photo by Mike W. Matthews).

Deer attacks woman in Colorado

A 77-year-old woman in Pikes Peak, Colorado, USA, was attacked by a deer (*Odocoileus* sp.) in her home after carrying groceries inside, the *Pikes Peak Courier* reported. According to Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW), the woman's neighbors had been feeding the deer, causing the animal to lose its fear of humans. The woman said the deer followed her inside through a door she had propped open and began eating some of the groceries she had just brought inside. The woman tried to scare the deer back outside, but the deer "thrashed her back with its hooves," CPW said. The woman contacted the authorities after finally forcing the deer out of the house. A CPW officer was able to euthanize the deer the following day.

Speed bumps protect monkeys

Recent installations of speed bumps in Jozani-Chwaka National Park (JCNP) in Uganda have reduced the number of Zanzibar red colobus monkeys (*Piliocolobus kirkii*) killed by vehicles travelling through the park, according to *Science Daily*. The reporting summarizes a study in *Oryx*, which found that before the installation, a colobus monkey was killed in the park every 2–3 weeks due to a collision with a vehicle. Afterward, the collisions decreased to once in 6 weeks. The most devastating impacts

of colobus–vehicle collisions is that there is no selection imposed by a vehicle that kills the monkey: vehicles are just as likely to kill the young as the old and the sick as the healthy. Contrastingly, natural deaths, such as predation, often target the old and the weak, who are less likely to contribute to the continuation of the species. The Zanzibar red colobus monkey is listed as Endangered under the IUCN Red List and roughly half the species lives in the JCNP.

Avocado farm threatens elephant migration

A proposed avocado (*Persea americana*) farm near Kenya's Amboseli National Park is worrying local conservation leaders due to the possibility that electric fences constructed to protect the crop from animals would block the migration corridor used by elephants (*Loxodonta africana*; Figure 2) to move between Amboseli and other nearby parks. *The Hindustan Times* reported that the proposed farm was originally backed by the Amboseli Ecosystem Trust (AET), a coalition of community and government representatives, but the AET withdrew its support, prompting wildlife authorities to order the projects halted in mid-2020. The fate of the project is now being debated in Kenya's environmental tribunal.



Figure 2. African elephant (*Loxodonta africana*; photo courtesy of M. Gadd, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service).

Fences protect turtles

To address declining turtle (Testudines) populations, a collaborative effort between the Minnesota Zoo and the Minnesota Department of Transportation is saving hundreds of turtles from being killed on roadways, according to *Star Tribune*. The now 3-year-old project, which

involves erecting small fences that keep turtles from crossing dangerous stretches of roadways, has cut mortalities by as much as 85%. The fences either turn the turtles around or funnel them to culverts under the roads. Future modifications to the fences are planned to prevent hatchlings from being able to pass between the mesh.

Sloth bear attacks people

After a sloth bear (*Melursus ursinus*) attacked 6 people in a single night in Bannerghatta National Park in India, officials issued an alert warning people to be aware of the animal and to stay indoors. *The New Indian Express* reported that wildlife and forestry officials worry the animal is rabid and say the bear could be one that escaped from a nearby rescue center. More than 100 wildlife and law enforcement officials descended on the area in search of the animal. A senior forest official stated that the hope is to capture the bear, but that if the bear is rabid, the animal would die from the disease in 3–4 days even if uncaptured.

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