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## Green and Greener, Where the Wild Things Are

By Dave Rochlin and Katy Foreman

Dave: Thinking green also applies to co-existing with the animals that we share our Lamorinda community with. The Lindsay Wildlife Museum in Walnut Creek just sent me an email reminder that we are entering the spring "baby animal" season. According to the Lindsay Staff, six squirrels are already in care because their nests fell out of palm trees. Apparently many wild animals find palm trees attractive as nest sites, but palms don't hold nests securely. Every year, many baby animals-squirrels, barn owls and others-fall from palm tree nests.

Katy: We're really lucky in this area to have the Lindsay, which not only provides education about coexisting with wildlife, but also runs one of the country's most sophisticated wildlife hospitals. In addition to those six squirrels from the palm trees, we've just gotten four more whose nests were destroyed by tree trimmers. Trees and bushes should be trimmed only during October through December, when very few animals are attempting to nest. Hummingbirds and squirrels start their nests very early, and it's often difficult to see a nest until you've already cut it down. If you do find a baby squirrel or a nest of them, there are various options. It's best to call Lindsay to find out which one will work in your situation. Their number is (925) 935-1978.

Dave: Well what if I do find a nest on the ground with baby birds in it?

Katy: Again, it's best to call Lindsay to be sure - but generally they will ask if you are able to replace the nest back where it came from or in a nearby tree. The parents are far better caregivers for those babies than any human can be. If the nest is damaged or won't sit tightly in the tree, you can place it in a margarine tub and wire that to a branch of the tree. Be sure to add some drainage holes in case it rains, but don't use a mesh type berry basket, or anything that a baby might get its leg caught in. Watch to see that the parents return and begin feeding the babies. You have to watch carefully though, because they make very quick feeding stops and fly away again to gather more food. If none of this is possible, or if you are concerned the birds were injured in the fall, call Lindsay to see what to do next.

Dave: No margarine in our house...but we do have a few Cool Whip containers lying around. Mmmmm...Cool Whip. So I've heard that if you touch a baby bird, the parents will smell human on it and abandon it.

Katy: That is right up there with stolen kidneys as an urban legend; most birds don't have a highly developed sense of smell. It's amazing how determined the parents are to continue to care for their babies. They will definitely not abandon them just because you helped get them off the ground. (Not that you should go poking around in birds' nests...)

Dave: What if I see an orphaned baby deer?

Katy: Baby deer are often mistaken for "abandoned" because the parents leave them alone during the day to eat. Do not bother a baby deer or any deer in that situation.

Dave: I have seen more than a few deer on the side of our busier roads (especially both Moraga Way and Moraga Rd) that have clearly been hit by cars. Often times it seem like drivers don't know what to do and just drive on... apparently the deer in headlights look is reciprocal.

Katy: I've never actually seen a deer get that look, though I've had it on plenty a Monday morning. If you are positive a deer is injured, in Lamorinda you can call Animal Services at (925) 335-8300. Deer are incredibly nervous and aren't

easy to handle on your own - I wouldn't try.

Dave: Dr. Nancy Anderson at Lindsay also mentioned that it is grub season, which attracts raccoons and skunks to your lawn. Raccoons have been peeling back my lawn for years to get at their favorite snack ...it drives me crazy! But she recommends avoiding pesticides, and says to use natural, beneficial nematodes which will get rid of the grubs but not poison other wildlife or pollute our streams. The folks at Orchard or one of the other nurseries should be able to help you find the right thing.

Katy: I'm all for any way to discourage pesticide use. Raccoons are also more likely to tear up an over-watered lawn, so cutting back on watering should help, and is a good idea this year anyway. There is a lot more great information on living with wildlife on Lindsay's website at [www.lindsaywildlife.org](http://www.lindsaywildlife.org).

Katy Foreman is a committed environmentalist who lives in Lafayette, and Dave Rochlin is a lazy environmentalist who lives in

Moraga. Together they operate

ClimatePath, a website helping individuals and businesses reduce their carbon footprints by offsetting and conserving in the ways that are right for them.

ClimatePath is on the web at [www.climatepath.org](http://www.climatepath.org)

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