

Dear Editor:

Spring is here and our wildlife populations are on the move to their summer living quarters.

Because so many roadways in our area pass through woodlands, dunes and wetlands, please exercise extra caution, especially at dawn and dusk.

Now is the time to spray your shrubs and plants with deer repellent sprays such as Ropel. For help with deer proofing and a list of deer resistant plants, please visit the Alternatives page at <http://defendurbanwildlife.org>. MSUE's Shane VanOosterhout and his Master Gardeners are more than willing to help you plan a garden in areas where deer browse. Watch for a deer resistant gardening seminar put on by MSUE this spring. Consider visiting one of the deer trial gardens that successfully flourished in the city limits the last two years. Scarecrow sprinklers <http://nixalite.com/scarecrow.aspx> and underground sprinkling systems that work based on motion detection have also been very successful.

When sprucing up homes - for example, spray-washing, painting and staining decks - check first for songbird nests and protect them.

When mowing lawns, avoid rabbit nests as they are shallow.

Should a critter move in where you don't want them, try wetting a terry washcloth with household ammonia and pinning it near the site. The smell usually encourages them to move.

Once committed to a nest, remember parents actively defend their family, as do we. Heed their warnings, keep a distance.

It is not uncommon for does to leave their young fawn unattended for up to 8 hours at a time. This is an anti-predator mechanism because it minimizes scent left around the newborn animals. Do not move or harass the fawn. If the fawn is indeed orphaned, please call the local DNR office or email defendurbanwildlife@gmail.com for a list of wildlife rehabilitators. Many of our local veterinarians know how to help injured animals or orphaned babies including bunnies, squirrels, waterfowl, opossums and turtles.

Our public utilities would like citizens to report injuries or problems caused by their equipment so they can make improvements. For example, bird diverters can be installed on power lines to make them visible to birds flying through. Contact Consumers at 1-800-477-5050 and BPL at 616-846-6250.

Fishermen and boaters, please remember that abandoned fishing line and tackle is the number-one cause of injury to wildlife along our waterways. As we have many unusual bird species migrating across our piers and watercourses, we don't want them to become entangled which leads to a cruel death. Please look for monofilament recycling bins on or next to our piers and boat launches, or take home used line and tackle and recycle it in closed containers