

## Leave Wildlife Wild

UNIVERSITY PARK (Centre Co.)—Many animals raise their young during spring and summer. If you come across one of those young animals, it's best to leave it alone, according to wildlife specialist in Penn State's College of Agricultural Sciences.

"People often encounter wildlife, particularly young animals, in the spring," said Dr. Margaret Brittingham, associate professor of wildlife resources. "Birds, fawns and rabbits are the most frequently encountered animals."

"People who try to help animals that seem to be wounded or abandoned have good intentions," she said. "But often they wind up doing more harm than good."

"Many people see a young, flightless bird sitting alone and decide to help by taking it inside," Brittingham said. "Problems soon arise because baby birds are very difficult to raise."

If you leave a bird where you found it, the parents will come to feed it. "It's easy to think that a bird that can't fly is in trouble," she said. "In fact, young birds often leave the nest when they can't truly fly, but can do a hopping half-flight. If you put them back in the nest at this point, they'll hop right back out."

If you're worried that a cat or other animal might get the bird, it's okay to place it out of harm's way in a bush. The adult birds will come back and feed it.

"If you can see the nest, it's all right to put the young bird back in it," Brittingham said. "It's a myth that if you touch a baby bird the mother will never come back."

If you discover a nest that's tipped over or fallen, pick it up, put the young back in it and place it in the tree. You also can make an artificial nest from a small basket and hang it as close to the original nest as you can. The

adults will find the young and return to feed them."

If the adult birds have been killed, the young birds may need help. "In that case, you may want to intervene—but if you try to raise the birds yourself, chances of success are slim," Brittingham said. "Take orphaned birds to one of the many wildlife rehabilitators around the state."

People also may find rabbit nests during spring and summer. "Rabbit nests usually are slight indentations in the ground covered with rabbit hair," Brittingham said. "People who come across a nest of baby rabbits often think the babies have been abandoned, but that's not so. Rabbits nurse their young only twice a day, early in the morning and late in the afternoon. The rest of the time the young rabbits are left by themselves. If you find a nest, don't disturb it."

Brittingham notes that rabbits periodically return to check on their young. "If the nest has been

disturbed, the adult rabbit will move it. Once my dog came upon a rabbit's nest. I got her away from it and left the nest alone. When we returned to that spot two hours later, the young already had been moved."

People also may find fawns in the woods. "Deer, like rabbits, leave their young alone for long periods of time," she said. "So if you come upon a young animal in the woods, don't immediately assume it's been abandoned. It's more likely that the adult will return later."

Brittingham also urges people to remember that you can be injured trying to aid wildlife.

"By handling wild animals, you put yourself at risk of being scratched, bitten or even contracting a disease," she said. "Raccoons, for instance, often carry rabies. Many people are exposed to the disease each year by having contact with a raccoon."

"The best policy is to leave wildlife wild," she said.

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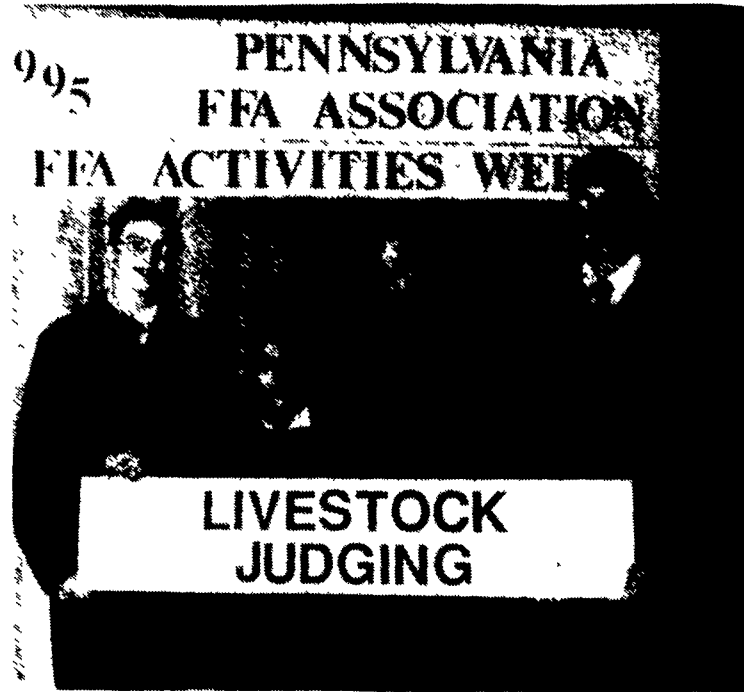
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# FFA HAPPENINGS



Livestock Judging, 1st place team, Newport FFA: from left, Bart Gill, Mary Jane Wright, Becky Myers, and Bradley Gill.

The Newport FFA was successful in placing first in the recent Livestock Judging Contest held during the 66th Annual FFA Activities Week and Summer Convention at Penn State University.

This is the first time an FFA team from Perry County has ever received a first place in the livestock judging. The team will represent Pennsylvania during the National FFA Livestock Judging Contest to be held during the National FFA Convention on Nov. 9.

In preparation for this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, the team plans on practicing judging in as many contests and fairs that are possible prior to their trip to Kansas City. The team members are Brad and Bart Gill, sons of Mr. and Mrs. Gary Gill; Becky Myers, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Danny Miller; and Marijane Wright, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. John Wright.

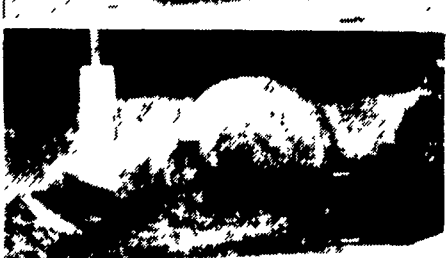
The Newport FFA adviser is Virgil E. Gutshall.

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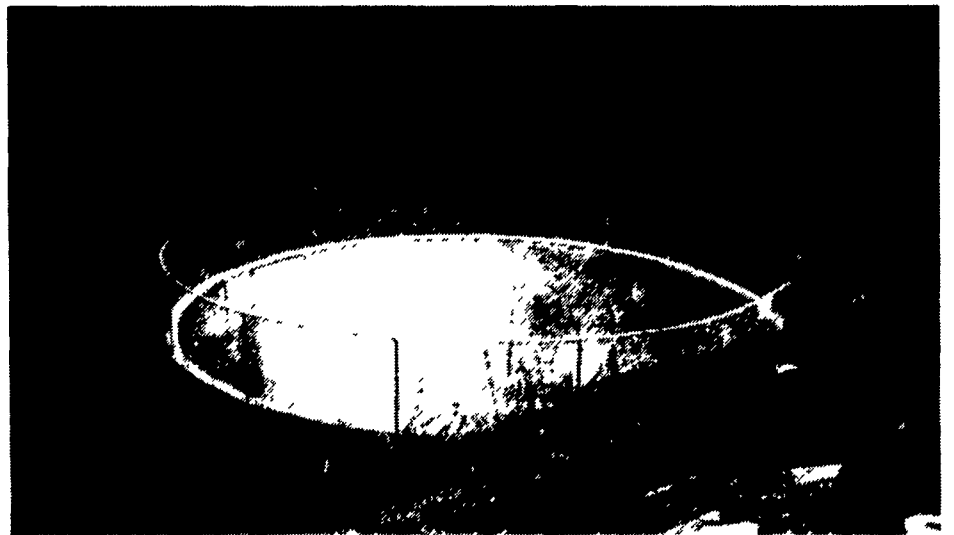
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