

On Tuesday, March 19, we officially welcomed spring. Some familiar (and not-so-familiar) critters begin emerging from their winter slumbers and start producing offspring. The N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission (NCWRC) offers helpful guidance when encountering various wildlife as they become more visible this time of year.

• **Black Bears** emerge from their dens in spring and become more active. BearWise (bearwise.org) offers springtime tips to help people prevent conflicts with bears. Humans may come across cubs that are alone - most likely waiting for their mothers to return from foraging. However, if you suspect a cub has been orphaned, do not handle, feed or remove it, as this puts you and the cub at risk. Instead, note the location and contact the N.C. Wildlife Helpline (866-318-2401) or contact your district wildlife biologist. If the cub is orphaned, NCWRC will place it with a licensed bear cub rehabilitator.

For information about living responsibly with black bears, visit Bearwise.org. For information about black bears in North Carolina, visit NCWRC's black bear species page at ncwildlife.org.

• **Snakes** become more active as the weather warms. NCWRC advises not to kill snakes because they help control rodent, slug and insect populations. There are many ways to coexist with snakes. Ten of North Carolina's 38 native snake species are listed as either endangered, threatened or of special concern.

If you come across a snake, remain calm and give it plenty of room to move along. If it's believed to be a rattlesnake or Northern pine snake, please report it through the HerpMapper.org mobile app, or by email with a photo (if safely possible), location (GPS coordinates preferred) and date and time observed to rattlesnake@ncwildlife.org or through NCWRC pine snake reporting tool. Contact NCWRC Wildlife Hotline for snake-related guidance (ncwildlife.org/Have-A-Problem).

• **Coyote** sightings spike in the spring and peak in May as they search for more food to support their pups. While they rarely attack people, they are opportunistic hunters, so smaller pets should be closely supervised when outdoors to avoid being preyed upon. Tips to protect pets include:

- Remove all outdoor pet food, fallen fruit, food waste and bird feeders.
- Keep cats and small dogs on a leash or harness whenever they're outside.
- Haze coyotes away from homes and businesses to keep them wary of humans.
- Install dog-proof fencing, which is at least 6 feet tall and prevents digging underneath.

Coyotes build dens in brushy or wooded areas to protect their pups when they are very young. If a coyote is staring or starts following you, her den may be nearby, so calmly leave the area and inform others to avoid the area for a few weeks. As soon as the pups can survive outside of the den, the coyotes will abandon it.

• **Foxes** give birth between late February and April. The pups (or "kits") start exploring from their den around mid to late summer, when breeding season begins. They are primarily nocturnal, shy and usually are not aggressive. Their appetite for mice and rats, and the occasional groundhog is of great benefit to most homeowners and farmers.

Similar to coyotes, foxes are opportunistic and will take advantage of pet food left outside, garbage and small prey that is attracted to bird feeders, (i.e., squirrels, birds). They are well adapted to living around people and thrive in neighborhoods.

It is illegal to relocate foxes or any possible rabies vector species (such as raccoons and skunks) in North Carolina, in order to prevent unintentional spread of disease to both people and other wildlife. Removing these species from your property requires euthanizing the animal.

If a fox may be trying to den near your home (under decks, raised porches and crawl spaces) consider these options to deter it:

- Place a spotlight or strobe light on the ground, pointed toward the den entrance.
- Play talk radio next to the den at high volume or frequently make loud noises in the immediate area.
- Install a motion-activated sprinkler near the den entrance or throw small objects in the adult foxes' direction to assert that their presence won't be tolerated.

For more information, visit NCWRC's Coexisting with Foxes at ncwildlife.org.

• **Rabbits** give birth around this time of year. Many people see newborn rabbits (kits) in plain sight, or in shallow holes tucked among clumps of thick grass, under shrubs, or in the middle of open lawns. Rabbit nests often resemble a small patch of dead grass. Female rabbits (called "does") actively avoid their nests and visit only once or twice per day for a few minutes to avoid attracting predators.

If a young rabbit is outside its nest and appears to be healthy and unharmed, leave it alone. The mother will usually return after humans leave the area. If it is believed the animal needs help, leave it alone and call either the Wildlife Helpline or a legal, licensed wildlife rehabilitator for advice.

• **Deer Fawns** are born closer to late spring and early summer. They are born with spots and very little scent for protection. Does intentionally stay away for periods of time during the day to decrease the chance of predators finding the fawn. Therefore, it is advised not to move a fawn. A doe will usually look for a missing fawn for about 48 hours. After that time, or if it is bleating loudly, appears thin or injured, or has visible diarrhea, it is advised to contact a licensed fawn rehabilitator for advice or contact NCWRC's Wildlife helpline at 866-318-2401. NOTE: All fawn rehabilitation within primary and secondary Chronic Wasting Disease surveillance areas is prohibited and fawns may not be transported out of surveillance areas in order to prevent unintentional spread of CWD.

• **Songbird young (chicks)** will hatch throughout the spring. Knowing the difference between a nestling and a fledgling bird can help you make the right decision if a young bird is found on the ground. Nestlings don't have feathers yet and cannot survive

outside of their nest for long. Return nestlings to the nest as quickly as possible, and if the entire nest has fallen, place it back in the tree or construct a makeshift nest.

Fledglings have their feathers and are able to walk, hop or fly short distances. They may appear helpless, but in fact have left the nest and are learning to fly. Fledglings should be left alone unless they are obviously injured or in immediate danger. In those less common cases, contact a licensed rehabilitator. Keeping cats inside and dogs on leashes also help these young birds make it through this vulnerable learning stage.

• **Hellbenders and Mudpuppies** are seen more frequently in early spring, mainly due to more people venturing into their habitats, specifically anglers, as hatchery supported trout waters open each year on the first Saturday in April. Neither the mudpuppy nor the hellbender is poisonous, venomous, toxic or harmful to humans, although they may try to bite if someone tries to pick them up. If sighted, they should be left alone.

Both species are listed as a North Carolina species of special concern, and NCWRC requests reporting sightings to Lori.Williams@ncwildlife.org and including physical location (GPS coordinates preferred) and a photo or video, or contacting NC Wildlife Helpline, 866-318-2401, and providing details of the observation. NOTE: It is a Class 1 misdemeanor and a fine of up to 120 days in jail to take, possess, transport or sell mudpuppies or hellbenders. If anglers happen to catch one by hook and line, they should carefully remove the hook if possible, or cut the line close to the hook and return the salamander back to the water.

Learn more about all of the subject of animal encounters by visiting: ncwildlife.org.



MOBILE FOOD MARKET

FREE FOOD MONTHLY

THURSDAY APRIL 18 BEGINS AT 10AM

Location: The Square in Uptown Wadesboro
Corner of Wade & Greene Streets

FRESH VEGETABLES FRUIT AND BREAD (IF AVAILABLE)

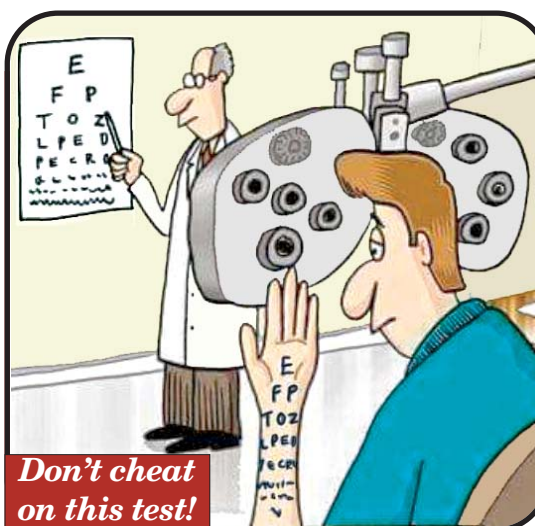
BLOOD PRESSURE CHECKS

BLOOD SUGAR CHECKS

OTHER HEALTHY LIVING TOPICS & BOOTHS

Nothing is required for you to receive produce, just come.

Sponsored by NC Cooperative Extension, Anson County, Sandhills Aginnovation, Pilgrim's & Atrium Health
Food given out as supplies last



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**THIS SATURDAY
APRIL 13**

Atrium Health Women's Care Drive to Thrive

Atrium Health Women's Care Drive to Thrive is a mobile care unit that provides a range of women's care services in a warm, welcoming environment. Services include:

- Cervical cancer screening (Pap smear)
- Screening for urinary tract infections
- Screening and treatment for sexually transmitted infections
- Birth control (contraception), including same-day access to long-acting reversible contraceptives (LARCs), like intrauterine devices (IUDs)
- First-time prenatal visits, if not established with an OB/GYN
- Postpartum visits
- Ultrasounds
- Mammogram referrals
- Social worker on-site to help connect with other resources

ANSON EVENT

SATURDAY, APRIL 13

9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

**Atrium Health Anson
Front Lot**

Walk-Ins Are Welcome



Scan QR code or visit AtriumHealth.org/MobileHealth for schedule, locations and more information.

Walk-ins or appointments accepted.