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Keep Them Wild

And off the streets... and out of yards (turkeys, that is)

By Sophie Braccini



Barry Hunau

"Wild" campaign material produced by the DFG indicates that

adult wild turkeys, which can weigh upwards of 20 pounds, can destroy flowers and vegetable gardens, leave their droppings on patios and decks, and roost on cars, scratching the paint.

In the same document, DFG touches on how to control the turkey population. "Hunting turkeys helps to control their populations and maintain their natural wariness of people. Where safe and legal, hunt wild turkeys on your property, or allow others to hunt them." Please note that the discharging of firearms is not allowed within Town limits (see Title 9, Public Peace and Welfare, on the Town's new website).

During the meeting, Council Member Dave Trotter asked Priebe if hunting turkeys with a bow and arrow would be permitted in season in the Town of Moraga. Priebe confirmed that as long as the arrows remain inside a private yard, there's nothing that specifically prohibits that use. He noted that the Town does have an ordinance that prohibits the use of bows and arrows in the public parks. The spring archery season for hunting wild turkeys starts the last Saturday in March and lasts for 51 consecutive days - that's May 21. (Read a related article in our archives at www.lamorindaweekly.com/archive/issue0106/pdf/fowlplay.pdf)

The resident who raised the turkey issue, Kiwanis President John Haffner, regretted that the matter was not considered more seriously by the Council. "To snicker at this is not the right thing to do," he said, "if we need to spend money let's do it, it is a sanitation issue; I press staff to find a solution."

Council Member Mike Metcalf asked Kosicki what to do if a rafter of turkeys blocked car circulation and became a public hazard. "Drivers do not have to stop for turkeys," said Kosicki, "and if there is an immediate danger, the Police Department can go and shoot the turkeys."

No action was taken by the Council.

Following a resident's complaint that turkeys are becoming a nuisance in the Town of Moraga, Chief of Police Robert Priebe reported on the current situation and possible regulation at a recent Town Council meeting. "A large part of the problem is that people feed turkeys," said the Chief, "They reproduce, congregate in large rafters and lose their fear of men."

Priebe explained that the turkey issue is not one that the Town can regulate; residents who have problems with the animals should contact Nicole Kosicki, the Fish and Games Warden for the Town of Moraga, who will ascertain the degree of depredation. If a nuisance is found, the resident can ask for the removal of the animal(s) by the Department of Fish and Game (DFG).

The real solution is to make sure that the birds keep their natural fear of humans.

According to the DFG, California's wild turkeys now occupy about 18 percent of our state. They were imported from the East Coast about 100 years ago as upland game birds. Many people like to see the turkeys wandering in the hills and wooded areas, but only from afar. The "Keep Me

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