

Wild Wednesday 29 July 2020

Summer brings an abundance of insects, greens, and seeds to coincide with a peak in arrival of new life—the babies that we find so adorable and irresistible. Here are examples of this fecundity: quail, goldfinches, squirrels, rabbits, sparrows. Populations of many species are declining quite alarmingly. Much of the decline comes from increasing human activity, often related to loss of vital habitat. Our dream of a greater Granite Dells Regional Park & Preserve could result in sufficient habitat to support a wonderful diversity of wildlife. But these animals have no voices in our media. Therefore, it is we, the humans who appreciate and, indeed, need wildlife, who must speak on their behalf. Won't you join us in speaking up for them? Together, we can save the Dells and all that depend on this amazing landscape.



Gambel's Quail are unusual in birds in that the father is capable, all by himself, of raising the chicks if something should happen to the mother. The chicks are precocial, energetic bumblebee-sized bundles that can feed themselves and can fly in just a few days of development. Still, mortality is high, and that's why we are not completely overrun with quail. Like most wildlife, they do best when we allow them to have life's basic needs: food, water, cover, and peace!



What is more appealing than the care of a mother for her young? Rock Squirrel babies are independent soon after they emerge from their dens, but once in awhile, you can see examples of maternal solicitude for a needy child.



Desert Cottontails are born naked and helpless in a fur-lined nest, but once they leave the nest, they are on their own. This has been "bunny week," with babies all over the place at dusk or in early morning. This one is grazing grasses but stays alert, as so many other species would love to have bunny burrito for breakfast or dinner. There are more irresistible baby bunnies later in this post, so read on!



Rufous-crowned Sparrows love the rocks and grassy slopes in the Dells, and it's uncommon to see more than one at once, but here I captured a young fledgling that has received a breakfast bounty from its parent. Yum!



The baby Lesser Goldfinch on the right is spreading its wings to solicit food from its mom. It's a scene played out in bird households all across the globe. The baby is fully capable of finding its own seeds, but hey, if Mom will provide, then that's even better.



Ah, that acorn looks yummy! You'll share, won't you?



OK, I've got your back if you've got mine.



I volunteer. Pick me! I'm ready.



Please don't interrupt me when I'm eating.



No plush toy can come close to being as cuddly as I am. Though you'd better not try cuddling me!