

HIGH DESERT MUSEUM

W I L D L I F E *and* L I V I N G H I S T O R Y

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Wednesday, May 24, 2017
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HIGH DESERT MUSEUM WELCOMES OTTER PUP *Young otter found on the Metolius arrives at Museum*

BEND, OR—Wildlife staff at the High Desert Museum are caring for an otter pup that was recently found alone near the Metolius River and Wizard Falls Fish Hatchery. The pup, a male, is approximately seven weeks old and weighs three pounds. A hiker found the pup and took it to a local wildlife rehabilitator. The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) was notified and took it to the High Desert Museum for care.

Corey Heath, ODFW District Wildlife Biologist, stated that after discussions with ODFW wildlife veterinarians it was decided that the best outcome for the pup would be to place the animal permanently with the High Desert Museum.

Heath reminded people they should not pick up and remove young animals from the wild, or assume a young animal is orphaned because it's alone. "In most cases the adult(s) have left the young as a survival tactic and are still in the area resting or feeding. The adult will return periodically to check on the young animal and to feed it. Many times this can take several hours," Heath said. "If you do happen to find a young animal and you are certain its parent had died because you see the adult animal, please contact your local Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife office, or a local wildlife rehabilitator." (A list of licensed wildlife rehabilitators can be found on www.odfw.com.)

"We're glad to be a resource to provide a safe, healthy environment to an animal and provide the best outcome," said Dana Whitelaw, Ph.D., executive director of the High Desert Museum. "We're proud to help bring awareness to Oregon's wildlife and the importance of leaving them in the wild."

The playful pup is being bottle-fed by Museum wildlife staff and is bonding nicely with them. "It's like having a new baby; it needs to be fed every few hours," said Jon Nelson, the Museum's curator of wildlife.

The pup is not currently on exhibit; over the summer, staff will slowly introduce it in a quiet behind-the-scenes area to the Museum's two other otters, Brook and Rogue, both adult males. "We'll follow protocols for introducing mammals to each other in captivity, which will include letting them see, touch and smell each other from adjoining enclosures for a time before being placed in the same space," said Jon Nelson. If all goes well and the otters get along, the pup will join Brook and Rogue on exhibit sometime in the fall, when the public will be invited to see it.

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ABOUT THE MUSEUM:

THE HIGH DESERT MUSEUM opened in 1982 and brings regional wildlife, culture, art and natural resources together to promote an understanding of the natural and cultural heritage of North America's high desert country. The Museum uses indoor and outdoor exhibits, wildlife in natural habitats, and living history demonstrations to help people discover and appreciate the high desert environment. The Museum is a 501(c) 3 nonprofit organization accredited by the American Alliance of Museums and is a Smithsonian Affiliate.

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