Influx of rabbits in Lake Tahoe brings more bobcats

By Cheryl Millham

The first babies of the 2012 wildlife season arrived on April 17 when Lake Tahoe Wildlife Care received five mountain cottontail bunnies, which were dug up by a dog.

It is sad to say one of the bunnies did not make it. However, the other four are doing very well.

If you would like to see these little ones, go to our website, click on “photos and videos” and you will see their first feeding.

During the past two years, more and more bunnies – mostly mountain cottontails – have been spotted in the Lake Tahoe Basin. People have told us that they have lived here for 25 years (and longer) and have never seen a rabbit.

Now the bunnies are living under wood piles and decks. At the end of February, we saw some rabbit tracks in the snow in the wildlife compound area, but did not see one until the middle of March. By the end of April, we were seeing the one in our yard on a regular basis, especially in the evening.



Many baby

squirrels arrive at LTWC still in the nest that was in a hole in a tree which was cut down. Photos/LTWC

Why am I telling you about the abundance of rabbits? Because in nature when you have prey, you will have predators.



Until their eyes open -- normally at 3 to 4 weeks of age -- baby squirrels must be fed a special formula via a syringe.

Can you guess what animal likes to eat rabbit more than anything else? Bobcats!

Last summer we had numerous sightings of bobcats on the South Shore.

Have they been seen before? Yes. But, we heard of more sightings last year than any other year.

Let me assure you of this fact. Bobcats do not eat dogs and cats. They do not attack people of any size or age. But they do love rabbits.

So, here is another chance to observe wildlife in the wild, co-existing around us and living a normal life. Enjoy them, do not put out any food for them and be happy we can all live together.

Cheryl Millham is executive director of Lake Tahoe Wildlife Careon the outskirts of South Lake Tahoe.