

Bald eagle shot in Tehama County

[Damon Arthur](#), Record Searchlight Published 5:12 p.m. PT March 15, 2017 | Updated 9:58 a.m. PT March 16, 2017



(Photo: Michael Brown, contributed photo)

A raptor advocate said the shooting of a bald eagle in Tehama County last week points out the need to raise awareness that shooting the birds is illegal.

“I think it’s always important for people to understand the pain and suffering they cause when you do something like that,” said Marily Woodhouse, director of Defiance Canyon Raptor Rescue in Manton.

She said a young eagle was found near Ash Street in Red Bluff on Saturday morning. A Red Bluff police officer and a California Department of Fish and Wildlife warden took the bird to the Red Bluff police station, where Woodhouse picked it up.

The bird was young because it hadn’t yet developed the white feathers on its head, which bald eagles grow at about 4 years old.

She said she took the bird to a veterinarian in Redding, who recommended taking the bird to the California Raptor Center at UC Davis.

“Their preliminary diagnosis was the eagle had been shot,” Woodhouse said. The bird died some time during the night after she dropped it off at the Raptor Center, she said.

An X-ray taken after the bird died showed that it had been shot in either the lungs or its abdominal air sac.

A bald eagle was shot to death in Tehama County. An advocate explains how it's illegal to harm the raptors.

She said it was a waste for someone to shoot the bird, and that while bald eagles are not on the endangered species list, there still aren't that many.

“The populations are always, at best, tenuous,” Woodhouse said. “It’s just not right to do that.”

Two of the seven bald eagles seen at the Defiance Canyon Raptor Center since December had been shot. Most of the raptors received at the center are brought there because they were hit by vehicles, she said.

A red-tailed hawk was brought to the center in December suffering from a gunshot wound, she said.

“She was luckier than the eagle, though,” Woodhouse said. “The bullet passed through her thigh and wing without breaking anything, and with a lot of care, she recovered and was released.”

Bald eagles are protected by three federal laws" the Eagle Protection Act, Migratory Bird Treaty Act and the Lacey Act, according to the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service.

The laws prohibit taking, selling, bartering, purchasing, trapping or shooting eagles. Penalties for violating any of the laws could include imprisonment and fines up to \$10,000 for individuals and civil penalties up to \$250,000 for groups and businesses.

Beyond the legality, Woodhouse said she was against shooting eagles for other reasons.

“People need to understand things in order to value them," she said. "Raptors are apex predators that are part of the intricate balance of nature. ... If that balance is out of whack, rodents overbreed causing many problems, carrion doesn't get cleaned up, causing disease — the links go on and on."