



Face of Fillmore

By Sherry Shepard
January 20, 2016

Driving through the streets of Fillmore these days can easily be compared to driving through a wildlife refuge. While we may not see lions and bears, spotting a few other species of wildlife has become a commonplace occurrence.

Just today, I saw the first wild turkeys in my neighborhood. These large birds have been a regular sight in the east side of town for years, but we live on Second West, far from their canyon roosting trees. I glanced out my kitchen window to see a parade of birds headed north along our fence line, then discovered another group running around in all directions just to the east of the first ones. Some flew onto the fence and watched the fun as others did their strange antics in the snow covered grass. Nearly a dozen followed a driveway south. I have no idea the total number, but their presence was a first for us.

Just a week ago, I found myself in a sort of traffic jam due to a large number of turkeys crossing Main Street and stopping traffic to do it. Obviously, turkeys have the right-of-way.



I was reminded of something I read recently about Benjamin Franklin and his thoughts on turkeys. He actually advocated that the turkey should be the national bird instead of the bald eagle.

“The Turkey is in comparison a much more respectable bird, and withal a true original native of America. He is besides, though a little vain and silly, a bird of courage, and would not hesitate to attack a grenadier of the British Guards who should presume to invade his farm yard with a red coat on.”

Another wild bird we are seeing a lot of is the quail. These cute little birds with their feathery top knot are often seen parading single file down a sidewalk.

While sitting in the car at the lumber yard as my husband looked for the board he needed, a large white rabbit poked its head around a pile of 2 X 4's and looked at me. This was not a cottontail or jack rabbit, but the everyday domestic Easter Bunny variety. It was especially large and hopped around like it was surveying the lumber.

Another "wild" domestic rabbit was seen sitting under the stop sign by the forest service office. Residents of that neighborhood have stories to tell of these visitors and their appetites for garden produce.

It goes without saying that deer have become major residents of Fillmore and are common in every part of town. They seem to be less and less frightened of people and have been seen chasing the local dogs down the street. While they are entertaining to watch, they are certainly a nuisance when it comes to gardens and yards. I watched a doe gingerly put one of my favorite tulip blossoms in her mouth and with a quick jerk, the tulip came up, bulb and all. Their grazing in gardens resembles the work of a lawnmower through newly started plants and the huge bites in tomatoes and cantaloupe attest to their large appetites. So far, high fences have helped to save us from their invasion, but driving down the street, especially after dark is always a worry.



As I have watched all of these wild animals, I have wondered if the early settlers saw them as close up as we do and if that helped fill their dinner tables.

