

Knock, knock. Who's there? A baby bear

Bruin dropped on wildlife advocate's front porch

By Greyson Howard

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The abandoned cub that was dropped off on a West Shore doorstep is staying at the Lake Tahoe Wildlife Center in South Lake Tahoe.

Photo provided by Tom Millham

Ann Bryant woke up Saturday morning to a different kind of orphan on her doorstep — a six- or seven-month-old bear cub.

An anonymous caller first contacted Bryant, executive director of the BEAR League, then dropped the cub off in a dog kennel at her house some time in the middle of the night Friday.

The person had told her the cub didn't have a mother and had been hanging around his or her home, Bryant said.

Bryant said she instructed the person about the legal requirements — to report the cub to the California Department of Fish and Game.

“Instead, somehow they caught him and left him here,” Bryant said.

Bryant said she then notified the California Department of Fish and Game and brought the cub to the Lake Tahoe Wildlife Care Center in South Lake Tahoe for rehabilitation.

“He’s a very hungry cub who’s been without a mother for a while,” said Cheryl Millham, co-founder of the wildlife care center. “He’s about six or seven months old probably. Not old enough to be out on his own.”

Millham said rehabilitation generally involves teaching the bear where to look for non-human sources of food.

Bryant said she grew concerned when it sounded like the Department of Fish and Game was going to release the cub back into the wild without rehabilitation.

But a wildlife biologist with the California Department of Fish and Game decided Tuesday to keep the bear at the center, Millham said.

“We have pretty strict guidelines to be a candidate for rehab, they have to be under 50 pounds and not acclimatized to humans,” said Steve Martarano, spokesman for the California

Department of Fish and Game. “This one is about 40 pounds and aggressive, which is a good sign — it means it’s not used to people.”

Martarano said the Department of Fish and Game hopes the people who dropped the bear off step forward, so they know the area the bear came from, and where they will release it.

People shouldn’t pick up wildlife, and should call the department instead, he said.

The new cub joins two others and the cub known as “Lil’ Smokey” at the wildlife care center, Millham said.