



CHICO POLICE DEPARTMENT

PRESS RELEASE

530-897-4900

March 22, 2013

For Immediate Release

Live pets do not make good Easter gifts.

Easter is only a week away, and you may be tempted to buy an Easter rabbit or baby chick or duckling for a child in your life. The City of Chico Animal Services asks that everyone who is considering giving a pet as a gift consider the following:

Although rabbits can make wonderful pets, they are naturally fragile and timid. An active child who expects a cuddly pet they can carry around can easily terrify or even injure a rabbit.

Rabbits aren't low-maintenance pets – they have specific dietary and veterinary needs, and must be seen by a veterinarian that specializes in rabbits. Like cats and dogs, they must be spayed or neutered by a rabbit-savvy veterinarian to prevent breeding and behavioral problems.

It's hard to tell the difference between male and female rabbits. Rabbits can start reproducing at 5 months of age, and can have as many as 6 litters a year.

Rabbits are highly social animals that require regular interaction with their human families. Rabbits chew, and their environment must be rabbit-proofed.

A well cared for Rabbit should live as long as a large dog (ten years or more), so don't give a rabbit to a child unless you know the child's parents will be happy to take on a decade-long commitment.

Rabbits are the third most common pet seen in animal shelters, and every year shelters see an influx of rabbits in the months after Easter.

Baby chicks and ducklings have a low survival rate. They need to be kept warm (95 degrees the first week, 5 degrees less each week after that) and free of drafts, and have very special dietary needs to survive the first few weeks of live. They are very fragile, and are easily injured by children.

Chicks and ducklings become adult sized within just a few weeks. They are farm animals and cannot live indoors. Make sure there is a place to house them properly when they are big enough to live outside.

Supervisor:

Watch Commander:

Prepared By: Tracy Mohr

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Each year children get salmonella from handling baby chicks and ducklings, a third of them are under 6 years of age.

A well cared for chicken or duck can live 7-20 years.

If you want to make a child's Easter happy, don't give a live pet unless you know it will be loved and properly cared for throughout its natural life. If there's any doubt, give a stuffed animal or chocolate instead. If they are really serious about getting a pet, a book about rabbit, chicken or duck care would be an excellent gift to make sure everyone is ready for a pet.

For more information about caring for rabbits, chicken or ducks, or adopting a rabbit, please contact the Chico Animal Shelter at 530-894-5630. Visit our website at www.chicoanimalshelter.org or like us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/ChicoAnimalShelter. The City of Chico Animal Services would like to wish everyone a happy and safe Easter holiday.

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