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Kayakers rescue rabbit anchored in river with rope tied around neck

By Jason Schreiber Union Leader Correspondent Jul 8, 2019 Updated 15 hrs ago



Two men kayaking on the Lamprey River rescued this rabbit, found with a rope tied around its neck and anchored by a weight. COURTESY

RAYMOND — A juvenile is expected to face animal cruelty charges after a rabbit was rescued from the Lamprey River with one end of a rope tied around its neck and the other attached to a weight to act as an anchor.

The female rabbit was pulled from the water and freed by two men who were kayaking in the river Sunday afternoon.

“We were lucky. We just came together with our resources,” said Mike Lothrop, a local man who was kayaking and fishing in the river near the Main Street bridge and provided the knife that was used to cut the rope from the rabbit’s neck.

Police Lt. Chad Shevlin said Monday that police received information that led them to the family that owns the rabbit. He said the case involves a juvenile who will be charged with animal cruelty.

Shevlin said it's unclear if the rabbit was dropped from the bridge or placed in the water from the edge of the river.

The rabbit is recovering at Candray Pet Care Center in Candia.

"From what I understand the bunny is OK," Shevlin said.

Lothrop said the rabbit was discovered around 4:30 p.m. by another man who was kayaking. Shevlin identified the other kayaker as Michael Eaton.

Lothrop said the rabbit was able to keep its head above the water to avoid drowning.

Eaton, also a Raymond resident, said he saw the rabbit out of the corner of his eye. When he paddled closer he could see that it was attached to something.

"It was pretty panicked when I pulled it in my kayak. I couldn't believe when I pulled on the rope and found a dumbbell tied to it," Eaton said.

After making the discovery, Eaton called over to Lothrop, who was in his own kayak, and asked if he had a knife.

"I saw he was holding this animal. I immediately figured out what was going on. It was a rabbit with a rope around its neck," said Lothrop, who handed Eaton his small knife to cut the rope.

He said the rabbit was lucky because the rope was long enough so that it didn't pull it completely under water.

"It had just enough length to the rope," he said.

The rabbit was frightened at first, Lothrop said, but it calmed down and was eventually taken by police and brought to the veterinarian for treatment.

Shevlin said the rabbit will not be returned to the family who owned it. He said police will contact the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.

Lothrop, a former police officer, said the incident was upsetting, but he was glad they were able to rescue the rabbit.

"What really kind of bothered me the most is that with abuse of an animal like that, there's oftentimes some deeper things going on," he said.

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