How Do Scientists Help The Community In The Animal And Human World?

By Cora Van Nest

The real life superheroes, scientists, help the community in more ways than one. Wildlife biologists live double lives: one in the animal world and one here with the humans. Sherri Lisius is a Wildlife Biologist for the Bureau of Land Management who has also studied many animals, including sage grouse, bears, foxes, and martens. Lisius, before coming to Inyo County, worked in Yosemite studying bears. If anyone wants to build or make anything with public land, she goes onto that land and checks for animals. She also makes sure that what they are doing won't harm any animals that could be there. She also deals with “problem animals”, which are animals such as bears that have been doing mischievous things in areas humans live. Lisius also does restoration projects on habitats for animals so future generations can enjoy animals too.

Sherri’s main job is to ensure that development projects done on public lands won’t harm animals. This helps the community for both the animals and humans. Animals get to be protected and their populations are less likely to be affected by our activities. One example of her work is related to a four-lane section of highway south of Lone Pine that has been proposed. Sherri and her co-workers can help the wildlife that live near this proposed stretch of highway by, for example, making sure that a small fence is built to discourage animals from crossing the road and being hit by cars. She would also make sure that the road is not built during migratory birds’ breeding time. It’s clear that Sherri Lisius helps communities of animals, but how does she help humans?

Sherri Lisius also deals with problem animals, which are animals that have some clashes with humans. Sherri and her co-workers put radio collars on the bears to track their movements. Using the collars, they can see which bears are getting into towns and are breaking into houses or cars, or sifting through trashcans. If bears become a large nuisance to humans, they have to kill the animals. So, if Sherri can keep bears away from humans, this will save bears’ lives and reduce the nuisance of bears for humans in towns. Sherri’s bear work provides a great example of how she helps animals and humans at the same time, but are there other examples?

She also helps animals and humans at once through habitat restoration projects. The restoration projects involve renewing and restoring natural places that have been changed by humans. Lisius does this for sage grouse, the main animal that she studies. Sage grouse love open, continuous sagebrush habitat because they use the sagebrush plants for protection and food. Sherri restores sagebrush habitat by planting sagebrush plants in areas where they’ve been removed, and also by taking away trees that have grown in areas where there once was open sagebrush habitat. How this restoration helps the humans, however, is by protection areas for animals so that their populations can thrive for many generations and so that humans can enjoy seeing these animals when they go out into these habitats. Having animals in future generations is one of Lisius’s main goals. Protecting their homes will keep animals from going extinct, and these animals bring a lot of joy to the humans that see them.

Sherri Lisius is like many other scientists that make differences for our community for any species. She helps with problem animals, makes sure animals are protected, and does restoration projects. She helps both animals and humans in more than one way. Sherri Lisius is a real life superhero on a mission to help many different communities, both animal and human alike.