

## Celebrate Life without Balloons



Weddings, birthdays and anniversaries are celebrations of life. Most of us love a party and mingling with family and friends. We share in the joy of others who have reached important milestones in their temporal journey.

Now, imagine that during an outdoor wedding party, a guest badly mistreats a dog, right in front of all the guests. I suspect that there would be dozens of horrified faces, even a few guests who would be outraged. The whole mood of the event would be spoiled.

This may seem far-fetched, but the injury and premature death of wildlife happens frequently—just out of sight, and therefore out of mind—whenever balloons are released intentionally, or accidentally escape into the environment.

For example: Following a balloon release at a recent wedding, Cape Cod researchers received a call about a beached seal. They found that the seal had swallowed a Mylar balloon. The seal and another animal found later were killed by ingesting balloons released at the wedding. I'm sure that the happy couple were quite distressed by the news.



The risk of injury to wildlife from balloons is widespread. Balloon remnants are found in large numbers along both coasts and at sea, as attested to by the Mazzanti family in our [previous post](#).

Recently, the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service reported that more than a hundred balloons were gathered at the Edwin B. Forsythe National Wildlife Refuge in New Jersey at a local cleanup event.<sup>1</sup> That's just one beach among thousands.

## Make a Difference

Fortunately, the wildlife balloon issue is one that everyone can relate to and, everyone can make a difference once they are made aware. We all go to parties and events where balloons are present. Let's make sure that when we celebrate life, we do it in a way that promotes the health of wildlife and ultimately, the life of the planet.

In addition to disposing of balloons properly, here are some suggestions<sup>2</sup> from the Environmental Nature Center, a concerned California organization:

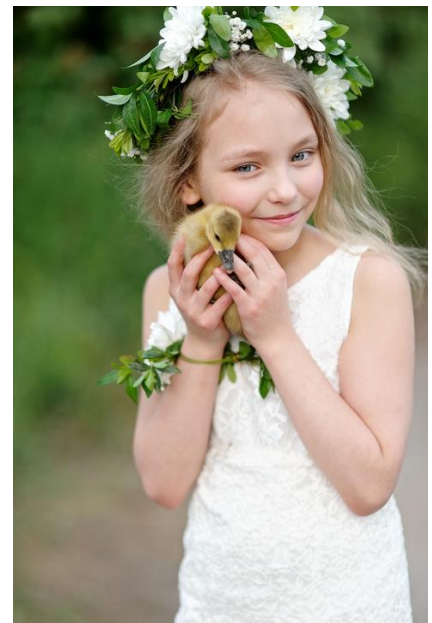
For favors or centerpieces:

- Choose edible or plantable items, which are less likely to end up in the trash.
- Buy local flowers or plants from farmers' markets or a "pick your own" location.

Instead of balloon releases:

- Blow bubbles!
- Display re-usable flags, banners, and streamers. They save money, time and helium over balloons and ribbons.
- Dancing kites with vibrant fabrics and eye-catching garden spinners can be enjoyed for years.
- Use tissue paper pompoms for a spectacular burst of color at parties or celebrations.
- Bang drums to celebrate. The beat brings people together and can be used for any occasion.

Here at eMazzanti, we just observed our 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary. We also celebrate together with our clients as they achieve various milestones. Through [Project Blue](#), we hope to increase awareness of the wildlife balloon problem so that all celebrations of life are just that—celebrations of life.



<sup>1</sup>U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Open Spaces, (August 5, 2015) Balloons and Wildlife: Please Don't Release Your Balloons, [blog], Retrieved from <https://www.fws.gov/news/blog/index.cfm/2015/8/5/Balloons-and-Wildlife-Please-Dont-Release-Your-Balloons>

<sup>2</sup>Debra Duncan, Environmental Nature Center, Balloons pose a risk to wildlife & the environment, [blog], Retrieved from <http://encenter.org/visit-us/programs/birthday-parties/balloons/>