



days at
Dunrovin

July 2019



**Ranch
Talk**



Fireworks: Fun Or Frantic?

The anticipation of a Fourth of July fireworks show begins in late June. Roadside stands pop up, the lure of bottle rockets and sparklers too much for both adults and children to bear. The day itself arrives, and the loud *pops* and *crackles* begin. For us humans, it is a happy time of celebration, remembrance, and quality time with family and friends. And we can't forget the traditional hot dogs and apple pie!

For animals, both wild and domestic, it is a different story. The blasts of sound do not cause awe and giggles for them. Instead, it is a sudden signal to their nervous systems that something is happening in their world that is unknown, dangerous, and even life-threatening.

At Dunrovin, we take extra care on the Fourth of July to ensure that our animals are safe.

- We do not book trail rides or riding lessons on July 4th.
- Our horses are not kept in their stalls, a confined space in which they can't hurt themselves.
- Our horses are in a pasture (or two) that is large enough to accommodate some running.
- Any horse or pony who is not in a pasture has a buddy or two for security.
- A staff member keeps an eye on our web cameras, alert to any horse who seems overly agitated.
- The ranch's dogs are kept indoors.
- We look for any falling fireworks into our pastures.

The town of Lolo, Montana, home to Dunrovin Ranch, is popular with fireworks enthusiasts. When the sun begins to set on July 4th, the sky will fill with the traditional colors and sounds of this important day in American culture.

Harriet and Hal have been on the Dunrovin nest through many fireworks displays in the Lolo area. In the past, they have not abandoned their chicks or their nest.



Remember, to an animal, the experience of fireworks is different than other natural loud noises, like thunder. Fireworks are closer to the ground, more vibrant, and are accompanied by sudden booms, flashes, and burning smells. Fireworks can emit sounds of up to 190 decibels, which is 110 to 115 decibels higher than the 75-to-80-decibel upper range of human hearing. These loud, quick bursts are commonly distressing to many animals; they can cause ear damage including tinnitus or loss of hearing.

How People Are Helping



In animal shelters across the country, hundreds of volunteers spend their Fourth of July giving comfort to dogs and other shelter animals. Some read to their charges, some sing to them—and some give treats. Despite the stress of the fireworks, being in a kennel or shelter can be difficult, too. Kudos to the volunteers who give the best gift of all—their time!

Sometimes, the panic brought on by fireworks can cause wildlife to abandon their babies and can be too disoriented to find their way home. Small mammals like squirrels, as well as birds and butterflies, have been seen exhibiting aberrant behavior as a result of the concussive shock to their bodies.

That's why several American cities are abandoning traditional firework displays altogether for quieter alternative light shows, including muted or silent fireworks.

One such alternative is a large-scale version of the pyrotechnics used for concerts and stage performances that maintained the flashy colors of normal fireworks while minimizing the traditional bangs, crackles, and whistles accompanying the explosions. Another option is an air show using lighted drones in the sky.

Fireworks Safety *for pets*



Keep your pets secured INSIDE your home. Even dogs in fenced yards find ways to escape the scary sounds.

Give them a safe place to hide. Set up a comfortable room or crate in your house just for them.

Use ambient noise to mask the noise. A radio or TV playing comforting music works well.

Update their IDs & microchips *(just in case).*

Skip the celebration and stay home with them. Sometimes your presence makes all the difference.

Keep them busy. Treat toys, like Kongs, can help distract them during the display.



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