

Do you kill and stuff animals to put them on display?

We do not kill and taxidermy animals to put them on display.

Our “stuffed” animals came from a variety of sources: some were donated to us by citizens, some came to us from the junior museum, we have even had “loaner” animals as part of a traveling exhibit.

We find many dead animals in Palo Alto Open Space, something nearly every week. Animals that die of natural causes (disease, killed by other animals) and even animals that are hit by cars, very soon turn into habitat for other organisms. As a carcass decays various decomposers begin working on it almost immediately.

First what ever killed it gets a chance (mountain lion for instance) to break up the carcass. Then opportunistic predators/scavengers get a chance to work on the carcass (coyotes, vultures). After them, insects start to work (yellow jackets, beetles, flies and their larva). Then even smaller organisms like bacteria (responsible for the nasty smell of many dead things) and fungi take part in the decomposition.

We leave animal carcasses in place (or move them just far enough out of the way to be out of sight) so that they can be food and homes for the organism in the decomposition chain.