

Let sleeping fawns lie: CDFW urges public to leave deer fawns alone

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Late spring and early summer is the peak time for California's deer herds to give birth to fawns, and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) is issuing a reminder to well-intentioned people to not interact with the baby deer – even if they find one that appears to be abandoned.

Adult female deer often stash their fawns in tall grass or brush for many hours while they are out foraging for food.

“Each year dozens of fawns across the state have their lives shortened by well-meaning residents,” said Axel Hunnicutt, Siskiyou unit biologist with CDFW's Northern Region. “For the first several weeks of their lives, young deer are left for extended periods by their mother as a survival strategy. People who interfere with this process always mean well but end up disrupting nature and the life of both mother and fawn.”

Each year, CDFW and wildlife rehabilitation facilities are called to assist with fawns that have been removed from the wild by concerned members of the public recreating outdoors. With limited long-term placement

options in zoos or other wildlife sanctuaries, the animals often have to be euthanized since they lack the survival skills to be released back into the wild and can become dangerous and difficult to keep as they become bigger.

To report an injured, sick or suspected orphaned fawn, contact your local CDFW regional office directly.

Anyone who removes a young animal from the wild is required to notify CDFW or take the animal to a permitted wildlife rehabilitator within 48 hours. Only a limited number of wildlife rehabilitation facilities are licensed to accept fawns.

It is both illegal to feed deer and keep deer in your personal possession. Both crimes are misdemeanors, each subject to penalties of up to \$1,000 and/or six months in jail.