



DO YOU KNOW...

HOW TO TELL IF THAT FAWN REALLY NEEDS YOUR HELP???

Now that the spring baby season is upon us, you may find babies in what may seem to be precarious situations. Wild animals raise their young differently than most people are used to. White-tailed Deer are no exceptions. As early as April, but most often in May and June, you may find a White-tailed Deer fawn curled up in your lawn, garden, bushes, or nearby field or trees. You may think it has been abandoned, but most of the time this is not the case. White-tailed does spend a small portion of the pre-dawn hours looking for a quiet, secluded spot to place their fawn(s) that are three weeks of age and under, as they will not be able to keep up with the doe's pace. While you may not think your garden is an ideal spot since you, your family, and your pets may be out and about during the day, it looks ideal at four in the morning. Below are some simple questions you can ask yourself to determine if the fawn needs a rehabilitator's assistance. It is always best for you to call the rehabilitator first, instead of showing up at their door with a fawn in your arms.



- 1) **Is the fawn lying quietly?** Do not be alarmed if the fawn makes no move to run even if you approach. As they are a prey species, instinct alerts them to remain quiet and still in the hopes that the predator (i.e., you) will not notice and move on.
 - a) Is the fawn wet? This could mean that the fawn has spent the night in that spot and is now covered in dew. This is unnatural and could mean the fawn has been orphaned. Call your local rehabilitator for advice.
 - b) Is the fawn unresponsive? Even though they may not leave, the fawn should be aware of its surroundings. If it appears dazed or lethargic, call your local rehabilitator for advice.
 - c) Has the fawn spent more than 10 hours in the same spot? Most White-tailed does do not leave their fawns for more than 10 hours as they will need to be nursed. If you know that the fawn has been there for more than 10 hours, call your local rehabilitator for advice.
- 2) **Is the fawn wandering and crying?** When a White-tailed fawn is vocal, it is usually near panic-mode. As all prey species do not like to vocalize when frightened (since it gives away their hiding spot to any nearby predators), a vocal fawn is usually an orphaned fawn. If no doe has approached the fawn, call your local rehabilitator for advice.
- 3) **Is the fawn covered in ants and/or flies?** Any healthy fawn will not allow dozens of insects to crawl, bite, or lay eggs on it.
 - a) Are there more than a dozen insects on the fawn? Ants and flies are always bothersome and a healthy fawn should have no trouble twitching its skin or wagging its tail to remove them. A larger load of insects, however, may be more than the fawn can stand especially if it is already debilitated. Determine the amount and type of troublesome insects and call your local rehabilitator for advice.

- b) Are the fawn's eyes or muzzle swollen or weepy? Multiple ant bites can cause swelling and irritation to sensitive skin. If the fawn's eyes are swollen shut, it will need medical attention so call your local rehabilitator for advice.
 - c) Are there patches of yellow in the fawn's fur? If there are multiple flies buzzing about the fawn and it is making no moves to shoo them off, the flies may be laying their eggs in the fur. Any animal that has fly eggs on it should be brought to a rehabilitator's attention immediately.
- 4) **Was the fawn found in or near a road?** Sometimes White-tailed fawns appear left behind when crossing roads as they are not as fast as their mothers and may not be used to the feel of the pavement.
- a) Is there a dead or injured doe nearby? In either case, the fawn will need a rehabilitator's care. If there is no doe visible, she is most likely hidden on the side of the road awaiting her fawn. Simply help the fawn across the road in the direction it was heading.
 - b) Is the fawn injured? Call your local rehabilitator for advice.
- 5) **Are there dogs near the fawn?** Large dogs may attack White-tailed Deer fawns. If there is a fawn in your yard and you have determined that it is healthy and awaiting its mother, please confine your dogs to your house and walk them on leashes. Do not allow them to approach the fawn.
- a) Is the fawn injured? If dogs have attacked the fawn, call your local rehabilitator for advice.
 - b) Is the fawn in the dog's mouth? White-tailed Deer have thin skin that tears easily. Dog jaws are strong and can cause crushing injuries. Call your local rehabilitator for advice.
 - c) Was the fawn chased a long distance? Confine the dogs away from the fawn and call your local rehabilitator for advice.
- 6) **Have you fed the fawn anything?** As White-tailed Deer are ruminants (having a complex, four-chambered stomach), being fed anything other than their normal diet can have dire consequences. Please do not feed the fawn, but if you already have, read below.
- a) Was the fawn fed a dairy product? Cow's milk causes severe digestion problems in other species. If the fawn was fed a dairy product, call your local rehabilitator for advice.
 - b) Was the fawn fed Pedialyte or water? As Pedialyte and water are simply re.-hydrators. the fawn should be all right. Call your local rehabilitator for advice.

RETURNING WHITE-TAILED FAWNS TO THEIR DOES

If you or a neighbor has moved a fawn that does not need a rehabilitator's help, here are some tips to replacing the fawn and ensuring its return to its mother.

- Return the fawn as soon as possible as the doe's milk will begin to dry up in 24 hours.
- Human and dog scent will not keep the doe from returning to her fawn. If those scents bothered her, she would have not left her fawn in your yard.
- The doe/fawn bond is very strong. White-tailed Deer have scent glands in between their hooves that are individual and help them to find one another. Fawns also have a nursing cry to which the doe will respond.
- Return the fawn as close as possible to the site where it was found. Place the fawn on the ground away from ant hills. Keep all people and pets away from the area.

- Once the fawn is placed back where it was found, leave quickly. If you leave too slowly, the fawn may get confused and try to follow. Do not make the fawn lay down. If it walks away, leave it alone.
- If dogs have chased the fawn, return it to nearby woods or field while keeping the dogs contained for several hours, lest they find the scent again.
- If the fawn was found by the road, place it out of harm's way, preferably over a fence.
- Allow at least 10 hours for the fawn to remain undisturbed before checking, preferably overnight. White-tailed Deer are crepuscular, meaning they are most active at dawn and dusk hours.
- If the fawn is in the same location after 10 hours, re-evaluate its health status and call your local rehabilitator for advice.

...NOW YOU KNOW!!

Reprinted from "Second Thoughts" newsletter – Winter 2007.

Copyright 2007 – Second Chance Wildlife Center, Inc.