

# WHAT TO DO AND NOT TO DO

## As fawns start emerging, hands off is the best approach

Spring has sprung and that means babies of all varieties are being born. Here in Sonoma County we are blessed with an abundance of creatures, both domestic and wild. Our most prolific wild animals are deer, and this is the time of year that fawns are hitting the ground in all their spotted adorableness.

Fawns are born with a very specific set of characteristics meant to help them survive. Fawns are born scentless and have spots for camouflage for a reason. This is so the does can leave them all alone to sleep in the tall grass while mom is out foraging.

The challenge often comes when people come upon these fawns, and finding them alone, assume them abandoned or orphaned.

Many times people find, or their dogs flush, a fawn and they assume it is an orphan **It is not**. The mothers can be gone for several hours and will reunite with their fawns at that time.

“Most of the time the fawn is fine,” Matt Wolfe, animal care coordinator for Fawn Rescue, said. “The mom will leave them, and people have a hard time with that because they are so fragile and tiny. They’ll hover over the fawn and mom won’t come back while they are there because we are a predator to them. If they are standing over the fawn because it’s alone, they are making the problem worse.”

Deer are really hard to handle, they are super reactive. If a fawn is lying upright, eyes wide open, but flattened to the ground, this is its camouflage position, which allows it to blend in with its surroundings.

“The fawn will bleat for Mom,” Wolfe said. “Over time the fawn will let you know it’s in trouble. If they are dirty, that’s another warning sign we look for. They should be spotless;

Mom keeps them clean so they don’t have a scent to predators.”

It is critical that people keep their dogs on a leash, (when out and about) as even running after a fawn or a pregnant doe can stress them enough to be deadly.

Human interactions with fawns are common. Listed below are some fawn questions you might have about what to do or don’t do.

### 1. What should you do if you find one?

<https://fawnrescue.org/what-to-do-if-you-find-a-fawn/>

### 2. How do you know when to intervene?

If the fawn is obviously injured, crying, walking in circles, or you see that the doe is dead — call Fawn Rescue immediately at 707-931-4550.

### 3. When to steer clear because Momma Deer has it well in hand?

If the fawn looks like it is ‘hiding’, leave it alone. When it is old enough and strong enough it will be able to keep up with its mother.

### 4. What should you do if you hit an animal? <https://fawnrescue.org/what-to-do-if-you-hit-an-animal/>

### 5. What should I do if I have a fawn at home? <https://fawnrescue.org/what-to-do-if-you-have-a-fawn-at-home/>

If you find an injured or distressed spotted fawn in Sonoma County call Fawn Rescue at (707) 931-4550 and be prepared to give exact directions. If there is an injured adult deer, contact Sonoma County Animal Care & Control at (707) 565-7100. For more information on when to call about a fawn you fear might be in distress, check out [fawnrescue.org](https://fawnrescue.org).

Concerned citizens should always feel free to call Fawn Rescue to discuss their situation.