

The Law and The Fawn

Missouri law prohibits the possession of any species of protected wild animal without a permit. Deer are protected under this Missouri law. The rehabilitators at Lakeside Nature Center are licensed to administer to and possess wildlife for the purpose of release under this law, (see below)

What Wildlife Rehabbers Do

Wildlife rehabilitators are extensively trained with years of experience dealing with wild animals. Before they can become a licensed wildlife rehabilitator, they must have training in how to take care of an animal, continuing education on new techniques, and pass tests. The rehabbers are committed to helping wild animals return to their habitat in the wild, as healthy productive members of their species.

Often with the help of a trained rehabilitator, the fawn can be returned to its mother which is the ideal solution. Rehabbers are qualified to care for this fawn, but no one is a better caregiver than the doe.

Why You Can't Keep It

- The doe is looking for her baby.
- A fawn's best chance for survival is with its mother.
- Keeping a fawn is against the law.
- Fawns have very specific dietary requirements that are difficult to meet artificially. When those requirements are not met, their bones and internal organs do not develop properly. Once the damage is done, it cannot

be reversed.

- Artificial diets fed to fawns by wildlife rehabilitators are very expensive.
- Feeding and caring for a fawn is very time consuming.
- Fawns carry parasites and diseases that can be spread to pets and humans, particularly children.
- A fawn raised with humans will not socialize with other wild deer. It will not know how to survive in the wild.
- Deer stress very easily and life in captivity would be unbearable. Stress can cause both physical and mental problems.
- A wild animal will never make a good pet. The cute fawn will grow very quickly into a full grown deer which can be very dangerous. They are instinctual animals, no matter how long they are in captivity. Unpredictable and dangerous actions are common. There have been reports of "pet" deer killing their keeper. Bucks are especially dangerous during the fall mating season as they see the human as competition for the doe.

~ Remember ~

- ▶ **Wild animals are meant to be wild.**
- ▶ **Fawns belong with their mothers.**
- ▶ **Working together, we can offer many young wild animals a second chance at the life in the wild that they so richly deserve.**

Who Can I Call for Help?

There are two places that you can call for help in the area.

If you found the fawn in Missouri:

Call Lakeside Nature Center. Speak to a naturalist or leave a message. Phones are monitored until 9 pm, 7 days a week.

Lakeside Nature Center

4701 E Gregory Blvd
Kansas City, MO 64132
(816) 513-8960

If you found the fawn in Kansas:

call
Operation Wildlife
11218 W 75th Street
Shawnee Mission, KS 66214
(913) 631-6566



Does this Fawn Need Assistance?

A Guide to Helping Fawns



Friends of
Lakeside Nature
Center

(816) 513-8960
www.lakesidenaturecenter.org

I See a Fawn!

White-tailed deer are found throughout Missouri, and during the summer months, it is common to come across a young fawn alone. As long as the fawn looks healthy, (fur well kept, no ticks, wounds, flies, etc.) you can be assured that **mother is not far away**.

Many people believe that a fawn found alone is an abandoned fawn. This is far from the truth. Mother may be out eating or maybe looking for a better place for her young. She knows exactly where she has left the fawn and will return shortly. If you find a fawn, be sure you understand the situation and the implications **before** you decide to take any action.

Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD)

Chronic Wasting Disease (DWD) is a fatal disease that affects white-tailed deer and elk. In the last few years, CWD has been found in wild deer herds in neighboring states. Missouri is taking aggressive steps to keep CWD from spreading into the deer population of the state. For instance, we need to keep fawns in their own county. If you are sure that the fawn is abandoned, call Lakeside Nature Center for instruction on what to do next.

Natural History

In Missouri most white-tailed deer are born in May and June. A doe can give birth to one, two or three fawns, but the usual is a single birth. Newborn fawns weigh between three and seven pounds and can stand and walk within twenty

minutes of birth. Fawns are alone most of the day. A fawn is less likely to be found by predators if it is alone. Twin fawns are often not together. The doe returns for a few minutes to nurse the fawn several times a day, but quickly leaves it again. She may lead it to a new location before she leaves. The doe is always within hearing distance of her fawn and will return if it calls. Very young fawns "freeze" and remain still, rather than running away. People who encounter these fawns often think they need help because they are alone and still. Unless a fawn shows signs of neglect, **it does not need help and should be left alone**. Quietly leave the area. The mother will not return to care for her young as long as humans are present. Fawns will be about 6 weeks old in July or August. They will now begin to forage on their own, eating more vegetation and nursing less frequently. It is natural to see them alone at this time, and unless they show visible signs of wounds, etc. **Leave them alone**.

When Fawns Do Need Help

Occasionally a fawn will get into trouble and need help to get back to its mother. The best action to take is one that reunites the doe and her fawn.

Before You Intervene

- Stop. Observe. Think.
- Do what is best for the fawn.
- Most of the time, it is best to quickly and quietly leave the area. However, the fawn might need help if any of the following apply:
 1. You know the mother is dead.
 2. The fawn has a serious injury

or broken bone.

3. The fawn is making crying noises and the doe does not respond, even after you leave the area and observe for at least an hour from a hidden vantage point.
4. The fawn is found lying in the road and is not trying to leave.
5. You can see the fawn has been attacked by dogs, etc.
6. The fawn has not moved for at least 10 hours.

If you think the fawn needs help, call one of the numbers listed on this brochure. The phones are monitored after hours and holidays. There are trained wildlife rehabilitators who will talk you through any problem. If the fawn is lying too close to the road and is in danger of being hit, gently stand the fawn up and **walk** it to a safer spot in the same area. Fawns have scent glands in their feet and the doe can follow their scent.

While waiting for the rehabilitator:

- Keep track of the fawn's location.
- Keep children and pets away from the fawn.
- Keep noise to a minimum.
- DO NOT bring the fawn inside.
- NO NOT touch or pet the fawn. Your dog or cat might appreciate your touch, but wild animals do not. Petting the fawn will cause it to become stressed, which sometimes can lead to its death.

- DO NOT feed the fawn. If the fawn is fed something it is not used to eating, it may become sick and unable to be returned to its mother.

NOTE: If you have to chase the fawn, it does not need help. You should leave the area immediately so the fawn can call or return to its mother.

Sometimes the help that you give does not involve handling the fawn. If dogs are attacking or harassing the fawn, persuade the dog owners to get their animals away and under control.

If people are bothering the fawn, help them understand, and persuade them to leave the area.

