

## Don't Fawn Over Fawns

Spring has sprung! As we wander through the woods or even our backyards, we may encounter young wildlife at this time of year, particularly fawns. When these encounters occur it is important to keep a respectful distance from the animal to ensure their safety.

Does typically birth their fawns in **May and June**, however fawns can be found as early as April. A newborn fawn is unsure of its footing and is unable to keep up with its mother. So, the doe hides her spotted fawn in a secluded area for safe keeping. The mother deer then **intentionally** leaves her fawn alone to help increase its chances of survival. Beyond the spotted camouflage and the instinct to lie very still, fawns have an additional survival adaptation: they have very little scent, making it challenging for predators to find them.



An adult deer, however, has plenty of scent to it, and – being a large animal – is fairly easy to spot. Rather than hang around and draw attention to where she has carefully hidden her fawn, the doe opts to graze elsewhere. The doe **returns** periodically to nurse her fawn and is usually not too far away. It does not take long before the fawn is strong enough to keep up with its mother and then has a better chance of outrunning a predator. **Fawns are rarely abandoned.**

When humans, often compassionate and well-intentioned, move these fawns, that's when the animals become distressed. Ultimately, a wild animal's best chance of survival is **staying in the wild**. This is especially true for baby animals. Only licensed wildlife rehabilitators may legally possess abandoned or injured wildlife of any kind. Unless you are licensed, it is illegal to possess or move a live wild animal in Michigan. The only time a baby animal may be removed from the wild is when it is known the parent is dead or the animal is injured. However, a licensed rehabilitator **must** be contacted before removing an animal from the wild, as wildlife rehabilitators have gone through training on proper handling of injured, sick or orphaned wild animals.



A list of licensed wildlife rehabilitators in Michigan can be found by visiting [mi.gov/wildlife](http://mi.gov/wildlife) or by calling your local DNR office. Local wildlife rescues for various types of animals are:

Bird Center of Washtenaw County Rescue: 734.761.9640

Friends of Wildlife Rescue: 734.913.9843

The [Humane Society of Huron Valley](http://www.humanesociety.org) 734.662.5585, ext.105, or 734.662.4365 (clinic).

In emergency situations, call 9-1-1. For non-emergencies call 734.994.2911.

Comments, questions or concerns? Please contact personnel at [DeerManagement@a2gov.org](mailto:DeerManagement@a2gov.org) or 734.794.6295