

Young Wildlife Should Be Left Alone

Springtime brings a flurry of young wildlife. However, it can also bring danger for these young animals found by the well-meaning public who thinks the animal is orphaned, abandoned or in danger.

Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife biologists recommend leaving wild animals alone. Keeping your distance increases the chances the mother will return to them and life will go on as nature intended. This goes for songbirds that have fledged from the nest and are learning to fly as well as white-tailed deer fawns concealed in thick cover.

They may look adorable, but they should be left where they were found. Only permitted wildlife rehabilitators may possess injured or orphaned wildlife, and only persons with a captive cervid permit may keep deer in captivity.



Reports of white-tailed deer fawns thought to be abandoned are common in May and June. That timeframe coincides with the peak of fawning season.

Newborn deer spend much of their time bedded down until they build up enough strength to keep up with their mother. Their reddish-brown coat patterned with pale spots aids in their concealment.

Fawns may get up and move, sometimes to very populated areas. They don't know what to fear and often times will be found in people's garages, bushes or in nearby shrubs looking for cover and a good hiding spot.

Often these fawns are found by people who do not see the mother. In reality, the mother likely is not far away. The mother also may distance herself to draw a predator's attention away from the vulnerable young animal.

In cases when a fawn is visibly injured, has been calling for its mother for hours on end, can't get to its mother on the other side of a fence, or if the mother has been hit by a car, it's appropriate to take action.

In these cases, please contact the department or find a permitted rehabilitator. A searchable list of permitted wildlife rehabilitators is available on Kentucky Fish and Wildlife's website at fw.ky.gov. Click on the "Wildlife" tab and choose "[Injured & Orphaned Wildlife](#)" from the dropdown menu.

Landowners may encounter deer fawns and ground-dwelling birds and other mammals while mowing fields or walking around their property. Consider cutting back on mowing until later in the season because fawns lie out in the fields for the first two weeks after they are born. Other animals use grasslands, many are species of concern and of high importance, and mowing during the breeding season can be detrimental.

Rabbits may continue nesting into the summer months. Homeowners who discover nesting rabbits in their yard might consider placing a flag or other marker to provide a visual cue to avoid that spot when mowing.

From rabbit nests to newly fledged birds to white-tailed deer fawns found curled up in cover and more, resist the urge to take matters into your own hands. Nature knows best how to handle its own.