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News Release

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Is that Fawn an Orphan? Or is Mom just in Search of Food?

Tips from MMWD and WildCare Will Help You Decide when Intervention Is Needed and When it Isn't

In a joint effort to prevent healthy fawns from being “rescued” by well-meaning watershed visitors who mistakenly think that the fawns have been abandoned, the Marin Municipal Water District and WildCare have teamed up to launch an educational campaign.

To prevent fawn “kidnappings” this spring, informational posters created by Marin county school children will be posted on MMWD watershed lands to teach visitors how to tell when a fawn needs human intervention and when a healthy fawn should be left alone because mom is doing her job, even if she can't be seen.

“It is incredibly important for people to understand that deer are very good mothers and do not abandon their young. In order to keep her young safe, a doe will leave her fawn in a grassy area, often for as long as 12 hours, distracting predators away from her baby while she forages for food,” says Melanie Piazza, director of animal care at WildCare. “Also, it is not true that human scent on a wild animal will cause the mother to abandon the baby.”

Fawns' camouflage and their ability to stay still keep them safe from predators while the mother is away. When approached by a perceived predator (humans, pets or wildlife) a fawn's automatic

instinctual response is to lay very low and not move at all. People often mistake this defensive behavior for injury, weakness or illness.

There is nothing more adorable than a fawn, which makes anyone lucky enough to come across one eager to “help.” But it is imperative to know when help is truly needed. Fawns are incredibly high stress and their captive care is very labor-intensive. Piazza says WildCare spends many hours reuniting kidnapped fawns with their mothers in an effort to keep young where they belong (with their moms) and to save WildCare’s hospital staff and resources for those fawns that truly do need medical attention.

The goal of the new educational campaign is to prevent healthy fawns from being unnecessarily “rescued” in the first place, saving everyone involved, especially the deer, a lot of time and stress. So how do you know when a fawn truly needs help? The “**5 Cs**” were developed to help answer that question.

The 5 Cs

Ask yourself:

1. Is the fawn **crying**?
2. Is the fawn **coming** toward you?
3. Is the fawn **covered** in blood or insects?
4. Has the fawn been **caught** by a dog or cat or other animal?
5. Is the fawn **cold**?

If you answered yes to any of the 5 Cs, call the WildCare emergency hotline 456-(SAVE) 7283! Don’t take it upon yourself to move a baby animal.

If the answers are no, keep going—Mom will re-emerge when no people are around. And when she does, she will be happy to find her fawn waiting for her.

Click here to view the [poster](#).