

## White Tail Deer Fawning Season

Spring is the prime birthing season for a wide variety of wildlife, including deer. White-tailed Deer off-spring, known as fawns, are born April through July, with the majority of fawns born in May in our region. Most first-year does will deliver one fawn, but twins or triplets are typically seen every year thereafter. The deer prefer to birth their fawns in our parks, but will also birth in some of our neighborhoods.

In order to keep her young safe, a doe will leave her fawn in a secluded area, often for as long as 12 hours, distracting predators away from her baby while she forages for food. Fawns' camouflage and their ability to stay still keep them safe from predators while their mother is away.

Finding a fawn alone for a long period of time is common. Many people assume that young deer found alone are abandoned, helpless, and need assistance for their survival. In nearly all cases this is a mistake, and human interaction does more damage than good. If you see a fawn or other newborn wildlife, enjoy your encounter, but do not attempt to touch or remove them - it is important to keep the encounter brief and maintain your distance.

A fawn's best chance of survival lies in being raised by its mother. Fawns may nurse three to four times a day, usually for less than thirty minutes at a time, but otherwise, the doe keeps her distance. This helps reduce the chances that she will attract a predator to the fawn. The fawn's protective coloration, near lack of scent and ability to remain motionless all help it avoid detection by predators and people.

If you find a fawn you should not approach it and by no means touch it or pick it up. The mother, if not harmed or injured, will return to claim it.

- If you feel that the animal is in harm's way, maintain a substantial distance while still being able to observe it and contact the Texas Parks and Wildlife Game Warden at 210-413-3525 or Leon Valley Animal Control at 210-684-1391 x 229 or 230.
- If you notice that a fawn is clearly injured or that it is near a dead adult doe, then it is acceptable to seek help. Call either the Game Warden or Leon Valley Animal Control.

If a fawn has been "rescued" when it shouldn't have been, it can often be released at the same location. White Tail deer does tend to remain in the area for at least a day, looking for the lost youngster and good luck has been had reuniting fawns that were kidnapped by mistake.

**Adopting newborn wildlife is illegal!** State and federal laws forbid possession of game and many non-game animals.