



California Wildlife Center

Patient of the Week

October 6th, 2023



Fawn transferred to us from Santa Barbara Wildlife Care

Mule Deer

Mule Deer are often referred to as “The Deer of the West”, - and are one of the most iconic animals in western North America. Their name comes from their large ears, which resemble that of a mule, and which rotate to detect sounds to escape danger. Mule Deer live alongside people as they are drawn to lush lawns, parks, and gardens where predators are unlikely to venture.

After a gestation period of about 200 days, Mule Deer typically give birth to two fawns in late Spring through mid-summer. The fawns stay with their mother for about a year before they are able to survive on their own. California Wildlife Center is the only facility authorized to care for Mule Deer fawns in Los Angeles County and each year, - we receive multiple orphaned fawns from various surrounding cities and counties.



Four week old fawn

When a new fawn arrives at our facility, we move them to a quiet and warm space to decrease the stress of transport before performing an exam. Like other prey animals, deer can suffer from capture myopathy, which is caused by extreme stress and attacks their muscles, paralyzing them and causing heart palpitations which usually result in death. To avoid this, we take multiple steps to keep them as calm as possible, including keeping their eyes covered during intake. Each new fawn is individually quarantined for at least one week. During this quarantine, our staff runs fecal exams and treat any illnesses or injuries before joining them with our other fawns in efforts to prevent the spread of diseases. Additionally, we limit human interaction while working with them to avoid habituation. When working with fawns, our staff wears camouflage hooded ponchos that cover their entire faces and observe them with cameras that are installed throughout their enclosures to decrease human contact.



One week old fawn

During their first few days under our care, we provide them with supplemental fluids and specialized enriched formula. When they first arrive, the fawns are usually bottle-fed. Once they have learned the concept, they quickly adapt to drink off a bottle rack.

One of our current fawn patients arrived at our center in May as an orphan and was very thin with mild dehydration. After following our standard intake

procedures, we monitored the health status daily while providing supplemental nutrition to help with weight gain. As their health improved, the fawn was joined with our two other fawn patients in an outdoor enclosure. Over the summer, our staff began weaning the patients off formula while providing



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ungulate foods and treats that can be found in the wild. For our fawns, this includes s veggies and fruits, broughs from local trees, and occasionally flower petals as a treat. The health of all three fawns is improving and gaining strength daily and will be assessed for release later this month. Once ready, they will be released on site in the beautiful Santa Monica mountains to join the existing herd.

As we Celebrate our Deer Friends this month of October, you can help our patients by donating [here](#).