



California Wildlife Center

Patient of the Week

May 16, 2025

The Fawns have Arrived!

Each year, we welcome Mule Deer fawns into our care, and this year, our first two arrived in May. We were fortunate that the first two fawns arrived within an hour of each other, as having a companion is important not only for their emotional comfort, but also to minimize the chances of habituation.

The first fawn was transferred from the Santa Barbara Wildlife Care Network. Unfortunately, the finder had reportedly kept the animal on their lap at a local coffee shop for an extended period of time. While the fawn may have appeared “calm,” she was likely highly stressed. This type of situation is particularly dangerous for wild animals, especially Mule Deer fawns, who are susceptible to Capture Myopathy.

Capture Myopathy is a life-threatening condition caused by extreme physical exertion or emotional stress. It results in muscle damage that can ultimately lead to death. Here at CWC, along with our partner rehabilitation facilities, we take every precaution to minimize stress for our deer patients, both in their enclosures and during medical care, to reduce the risk of this condition. One way we help keep their stress levels low is by limiting their interaction with humans. Due to the circumstances of this young female’s rescue, our partners at Santa Barbara chose not to perform an extensive initial exam in order to limit her stress. A few days after her admission, she was transferred to CWC.



The fawns are self-feeding using a bottle rack.



It is important for our patients to have companions.



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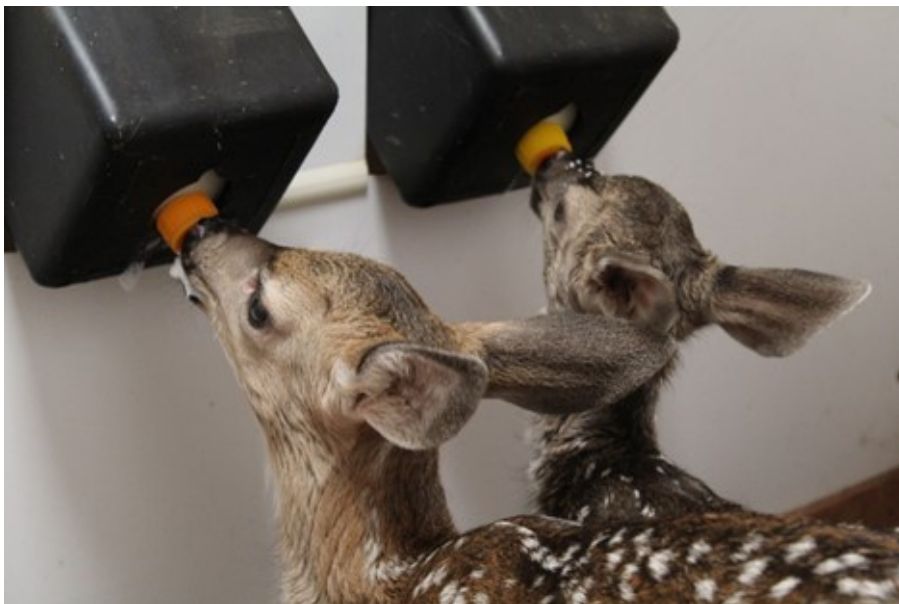
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The second fawn was found wandering around Studio City. Once safely contained and brought to CWC, her intake exam revealed that her dried umbilical cord was still attached, a sign that she was only about a week old.

Because of the high risk of habituation in fawns, our staff follow strict protocols to remain as hands-off as possible. Our deer enclosures are equipped with video cameras and one-way mirrors, allowing us to monitor the fawns with minimal human interaction. When hands-on care is required, staff wear camouflaged, hooded ponchos and move silently and slowly. A deer that becomes accustomed to humans can be at serious risk after release.

Both fawns are currently doing well. They eagerly drink their specially formulated deer milk, mostly without assistance, and are fed three times a day. They will gradually be weaned onto a dry diet designed specifically for deer. While they are currently housed in the indoor mews, each afternoon they have access to a large, fully enclosed space where they can run, explore, and soak up the sun.

If you ever find a fawn in the wild, please contact your local wildlife rehabilitator immediately. Do not touch or attempt to contain the animal, as each situation must be assessed by trained professionals before human intervention is appropriate.



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