

Important to leave young wildlife alone

Spring is a busy time of year for wildlife. Bears, deer, birds and bobcats as well as dozens of other species emerge from winter ready to fill their bellies and raise their young. Because of this increase in wildlife activity, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife reminds people to leave young wildlife alone if they come across them. The improper handling of young wildlife is a problem in California and across the nation, especially in spring.

Healthy fawns may lay or stand quietly by themselves in one location for hours while their mother is away feeding. Once a fawn is removed from its mother, it can lose the ability to survive in the wild. The same danger applies to most animals, including bears, coyotes, raccoons and most birds.

Dave Cook, a rehabilitator with Sierra Wildlife Rescue in El Dorado County, says his organization receives about 60 fawns a year, mainly between June and July, from people who believe the animals have been orphaned or injured.

It's also important to remember that wild animals carry ticks, fleas and lice, and they can transmit diseases to humans, including rabies and tularemia, so it is best to leave the responsibility for intervention to CDFW personnel or permitted wildlife rehabilitators. In addition, it is illegal to keep orphaned or injured animals for more than 48 hours in California.