

# CHANGES TO STATEWIDE FAWN REHABILITATION

WILDLIFE REHABILITATORS IN TENNESSEE ARE NO LONGER PERMITTED TO ACCEPT WHITE-TAILED DEER FAWNS.



## WHY STOP REHABILITATION OF FAWNS IN TN?

This restriction is an effort to minimize the spread of diseases through human-aided movements and to keep white-tailed deer wild. Part of fawn rehabilitation includes movement of the animals over potentially large distances to reach rehabilitation facilities. Fawns might also be transported long distances again when being released back into the wild. These human-aided movements of live animals pose a risk of spread of diseases across the state, including chronic wasting disease (CWD). Chronic wasting disease has been detected in 16 counties in western TN, and TWRA is dedicated to reducing the spread of CWD into new areas.

Fawn rehabilitation, although well-intended, can be detrimental to fawn survival once released back into the wild. Rehabilitated fawns show changes in behavior that make them more vulnerable to predators and more habituated to humans. The resulting low survival rates suggest rehabilitation is not an effective tool for enhancing white-tailed deer populations and the greatest chance of survival in the wild is without human intervention.

## WHAT DO I DO IF I FIND A FAWN THAT HAS BEEN ABANDONED?

It is best to leave fawns alone. Most likely, the fawn is not actually abandoned but practicing normal white-tailed deer behavior. Female deer hide fawns in cover such as tall grass or brush (even in your yard) to avoid predators while the female deer continues to forage. Keeping herself some distance away from her fawns prevents her scent from attracting predators to the fawns. Newborn fawns have less odor than mature deer and have spotted fur, both of which help them hide from predators. It is best to leave the fawn where you found it as the doe will return to nurse the fawn when it is safe. If you have picked up the fawn, please return it to the location it was found.



## REFERENCES

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