



## Pine Mountain Lake

# SAVE THE FAWNS

### PROTECT WILDLIFE

### IMPROVE SAFETY

Slow Down • Watch for Fawns • Share the Road

### Why this matters

Pine Mountain Lake is home to a wide variety of wildlife, and living alongside wild animals is an important part of our community. Protecting wildlife begins with understanding natural behavior and making thoughtful choices. Residents, guests and visitors can help by slowing down and watching for animals on and near roadways, keeping pets under control, giving wildlife plenty of space, never feeding or attempting to handle wild animals, and checking yards and vegetation before mowing or trimming. When an animal appears injured or truly in distress, the safest response is to contact a qualified wildlife professional. Save the Fawns campaign highlights the special care needed during fawning season, but the larger message applies all year: respect wildlife, reduce preventable conflicts, and help keep both people and animals safe.

**Protecting wildlife starts with respect: slow down,  
give animals space, and let them stay wild.**

## Understanding Fawns

Late spring and early summer are peak times for California deer to give birth. During the first weeks of life, a fawn may spend long periods lying quietly and hidden in vegetation while its mother is away feeding. This is normal behavior and helps protect the fawn from predators.

### **Important: a doe may be nearby even when you cannot see her**

Mother deer often keep their distance when people or pets are present. California Department of Fish and Wildlife guidance notes that mothers return to nurse their fawns repeatedly and may wait until the area is quiet before coming back.

| COMMON ASSUMPTION                                    | WHAT TO KNOW                                                                                                                       |
|------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| "The fawn is alone, so it must be orphaned."         | A healthy, quiet fawn is often exactly where its mother left it while she feeds nearby.                                            |
| "I should stay close and watch for the mother."      | Remaining nearby can keep the mother from returning. Give the fawn space and leave the area.                                       |
| "If a person touches it, the mother will reject it." | CDFW states that a doe will not abandon her fawn merely because a person touched it.                                               |
| "Taking it home will keep it safe."                  | Removing a healthy fawn can separate it from its mother and may prevent it from learning the survival skills it needs in the wild. |

### **What a healthy resting fawn may look like**

- Curled or lying quietly in grass, brush or landscaping.
- Alert when approached but not necessarily attempting to run.
- Clean-looking and in good body condition.
- Quiet for long periods while waiting for its mother.

## If You Find a Fawn

### **If the fawn appears healthy: leave it there.**

Stay a safe distance away, keep children and pets back, and allow the mother an opportunity to return. Do not feed, pet, carry or relocate the fawn simply because it is alone.

### **When human help may be appropriate**

Contact a permitted wildlife rehabilitator or the California Department of Fish and Wildlife if the fawn has clear signs of injury or distress, such as:

- Active bleeding or an obvious wound.
- A visibly broken bone or inability to stand normally.
- Very poor body condition, weakness or extreme thinness.
- Persistent wandering or other visible signs of distress.
- A known dead mother nearby or another circumstance strongly suggesting the fawn is truly orphaned.

### **If the fawn is in immediate danger**

CDFW advises that when a fawn is found on a road or in another dangerous location, it may be appropriate to move it only a short distance to suitable nearby vegetation so it can reunite with its mother. If handling is necessary for immediate safety, use a towel or blanket and minimize contact.

### **Already moved or touched a healthy fawn?**

Return it to its original hiding area if it is safe to do so. Human scent alone does not cause a doe to abandon her fawn.

### **Do not try to raise a fawn yourself**

Wildlife rehabilitation requires specialized training and permits. Improper care can harm the animal and reduce its chances of successful release. Only a limited number of California wildlife rehabilitation facilities are permitted to accept deer fawns.

## **Drive Like a Fawn Could Be Around the Next Bend**

In a wooded residential community, deer can enter the roadway quickly and young fawns may be difficult to see. Drivers can protect both wildlife and people by treating fawning season as a time for extra attention.

### **Slow down**

Obey posted speed limits and reduce speed further when visibility is limited, deer are present, or vegetation is close to the roadway.

### **Scan the shoulders**

Look ahead and to both sides of the road, especially near brush, trees, drainage areas and open spaces.

### **Expect another deer**

If you see one deer, watch carefully for additional deer or a fawn nearby.

### **Be especially cautious in low light**

Wildlife can be harder to see around dawn, dusk and at night. Use extra care whenever visibility is reduced.

### **Avoid distractions**

Give the road your full attention. A few seconds can be the difference between seeing a fawn and seeing it too late.

### **Give wildlife time to clear the road**

Do not crowd, chase or honk at deer to force them to move faster. Stop when safe and allow them to cross.

## **Pets, Yards and Everyday Choices**

### **Keep dogs controlled around deer and fawns**

Even a friendly dog can frighten or chase wildlife. Keep pets from approaching resting fawns, and do not allow dogs to investigate a fawn's hiding place. Children should also be taught to observe wildlife from a distance.

### **Do not feed deer**

Feeding deer can change natural behavior, draw animals into roads and residential areas, increase crowding, and contribute to disease transmission. CDFW states that feeding deer and keeping deer in personal possession are illegal in California. The agency reports that each offense can be a misdemeanor punishable by up to \$1,000 and/or six months in jail.

### **Keeping wildlife wild is an act of care**

Wild animals do best when they retain their natural behaviors and remain wary of people. The safest way to appreciate a fawn is from a respectful distance.

### **Before mowing or doing yard work**

Fawns can lie very still in tall grass and vegetation. Before mowing, weed trimming or using equipment in areas where deer have been seen, visually check the area from a distance. If a healthy fawn is resting there, give it space and postpone work in that immediate spot until it has moved on.

### **What PML members can do**

- Slow down and stay alert while driving through the community.
- Share Save the Fawns information with family members, renters, guests and visitors.
- Display a "Please Drive Slowly, It's Fawn Season" sign on your property. Signs may be displayed from May through September and are available for purchase at the Administration Building.
- Respect fawns that are resting alone and discourage others from approaching them.
- Keep pets and children away from hidden or resting fawns.
- Never feed deer or attempt to keep a fawn.
- Contact qualified wildlife professionals when a fawn appears truly injured, sick or orphaned.



Yard sign available for purchase at Administration.

## Quick Guide: What Should I Do?

| SITUATION                                   | BEST RESPONSE                                                                        |
|---------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Healthy fawn lying quietly alone            | Leave it alone. Move away and keep people and pets from the area.                    |
| Mother is not visible                       | That can be normal. Give the area time and privacy so she can return.                |
| Healthy fawn was touched                    | Do not panic. A doe will not reject it merely because of human touch.                |
| Healthy fawn was moved                      | If safe, return it to its original hiding area and leave.                            |
| Fawn is in a roadway or immediate danger    | When necessary, move it only a short distance to nearby cover and minimize handling. |
| Fawn is visibly injured, weak or distressed | Contact a permitted wildlife rehabilitator or CDFW for guidance.                     |
| Someone wants to feed or take the fawn home | Do not. Feeding or possessing deer is illegal and can seriously harm the animal.     |

### **A shared responsibility**

Protecting fawns does not require complicated action. It requires awareness, patience and willingness to slow down. When members, guests and visitors make those choices together we help protect wildlife and make our roads and neighborhoods safer for everyone.

### **Need help in Tuolumne County?**

Pine Mountain Lake is in CDFW Central Region (Region 4). For an injured, sick or suspected orphaned fawn, contact the CDFW Central Region office at 1(559) 243-4005, or contact a permitted wildlife rehabilitation facility. For an immediate roadway emergency or danger to people, use the appropriate emergency services.

### **Sources & Additional Information**

This packet is intended for community education. Wildlife guidance and contact information should be checked periodically for updates.

**California Department of Fish and Wildlife, "CDFW Urges Public to Leave Baby Deer Alone," April 10, 2026.**

<https://wildlife.ca.gov/News/Archive/cdfw-urges-public-to-leave-baby-deer-alone>

**California Department of Fish and Wildlife, Native Wildlife Rehabilitation: "I found a Deer Fawn. What should I do?"**

<https://wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation/Laboratories/Wildlife-Health/Rehab>

**California Department of Fish and Wildlife, Living with Wildlife.**

<https://wildlife.ca.gov/Living-with-Wildlife>

**California Department of Fish and Wildlife, CDFW Regions. Tuolumne County is served by Central Region (Region 4).**

<https://wildlife.ca.gov/Regions>

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