



Great Basin Wildlife Rescue

Rehabilitation & Education.

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Great Basin Wildlife Rescue is a 501 c3 non-profit wildlife rehabilitation center located in Utah County. We take in over 200 bear cubs and birds of prey a year. Our mission is twofold. First, our mission is to rescue and rehabilitate wildlife so that they can be released back into the wild. Second, our mission is to educate the public to how they can make a difference in wildlife conservation and expand their knowledge of wildlife in general. We travel within Utah County providing education programs to local schools, Eagle Scout courts of honor, fairs, and expos. If you are interested in having us attend your school or event, please contact us.

What to Do When You Find a Fawn



During the spring and summer we get a lot of calls concerning fawns. The most common question is "I've found a fawn. What do I do with it?" In most cases, unless the fawn is injured or in harm's way, the answer is simple: leave it where you found it. While you might think the fawn is abandoned, it is actually very common for does to leave their babies while they go off to find food to eat. Fawns are incapable of walking long distances and therefore wait for their mother to come back. Sometimes the

mothers have to travel long distances to find enough food to be able to produce milk for their babies. Once the mother leaves to forage, the baby deer then "hide" in the area where the mom leaves them.

To camouflage themselves with their surroundings, fawns will lie on the ground and hold very still. When approached, many fawns will continue to lie in their "hiding spot" to try to avoid detection. In other cases, some fawns may run away. Often, if a person tries to pick them up, fawns will hug their legs to their body and flop their head forward. Other times, the fawn will allow their whole body to become limp. This does not mean that there is something wrong with the deer. Unless you see an injury or feel that the life of the fawn is being threatened in some way, leave the area and allow time for the mom to

come back. The mother deer will come back to get the fawn but will not do so if you remain in the area. Deer can travel large distances, so it may be a while before the mother returns. In some cases, if you see and uninjured fawn on the side of the road, you may move the fawn off of the road and then leave it alone for the mother to find.

Do not put the fawn in your car or try to pick the fawn up. It is a natural tendency of humans to try to care for what they think are abandoned animals. It is important to understand though, that humans cannot take care of a fawn like the doe can. Humans cannot teach the fawn what it needs to know to survive in the wild. Further, deer have complex diets and by feeding the deer what you think it might eat, can cause more damage than leaving it alone. For instance, human and domestic animal formula can cause scouring, dehydration and death. In addition, petting the fawn, talking to it and holding it will not comfort it. Fawns are wild animals and should be treated as such.

If you find a fawn that is ill or hurt, please contact your local fish and game, department of wildlife services, or wildlife rescue. They are best equipped to help injured wildlife.

Riding Thermals



California Condor, *Gymnogyps californianus*

Have you ever seen a bird soaring in circles high in the air? If so, you've seen a bird riding thermals. Riding thermals is one way birds can fly without using very much of their own energy. Thermals are columns of air that are warmer than the surrounding air. They usually form in the morning and early afternoon, often above hills, plowed fields, paved roads, towns, or other locations that the sun can make hotter than the areas around it. Because warm air rises up, if a bird glides in circles within a thermal, it

can spiral upwards to the top of the thermal, where the air gets too cool to lift it anymore. Then the bird glides to the next thermal and rides that one to the top. But a bird needs to have a certain body type to get the most out of riding thermals. They need to have wide wings and a wide tail, which is why you usually see birds of prey like hawks and eagles riding thermals.

Spring is a great time to bird watch, because not only is the weather warmer, but the birds are often easier to spot since many have bright breeding plumage in the spring. Their desire to find a mate often makes them easier to hear as well. However, please make sure that you don't get too close to nests, as this can stress the birds. If you go on a bird watching hike this spring, be careful and aware of other animals that are also

breeding at this time. Also be watchful of melting snow and rain, which can make trails muddy and slippery, and make sure you dress weather appropriate since the weather can sometimes change quickly.

Answers from Connery

Do Black Birds Get Hot in the Summer Sun?

You may have noticed that wearing a black shirt in the summer will make you hotter than a white shirt. This is because black absorbs the sunlight, while white reflects it. This same principle applies to birds too: dark feathers absorb more light, creating more heat. So while black feathers are great in winter or for birds that live in cold climates, they can make a bird pretty hot in the summer. But luckily, birds have ways of cooling off.



Connery the northern saw-whet owl.



Common raven, *Corvus corax*

One way is by panting with their beaks open, which allows cooler air to travel through the lungs and move heat away from their bodies. Similarly, birds may flutter their throats, since that area has a lot of blood and hence a lot of heat. Birds might also ruffle their feathers and spread their wings to allow air to reach their skin, and dark-colored birds with some lighter feathers may turn the lighter ones towards the sun to reflect the light. While birds of prey can take to the skies to find cooler temperatures in higher altitudes, many other birds find water and take a bath to cool off. Birds also cool down by staying in the shade and not being very active during the hottest parts of the day.

Picture Credits

p.1 Mule deer fawns, *Odocoileus*

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p.2. California condor *Gymnogyps californianus*,

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p.3 top: Connery, northern saw-whet owl, Great Basin Wildlife Rescue,

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