



Of dogs and deer -by Marjorie Davis



Fawn Rescue receives many fawns each year that are seriously injured due to dog attacks, while others die unaided in remote areas. The true count of wildlife brought down by unrestrained domestic animals will never be known.

The tragedy is that wildlife continues to be chased, captured, and killed by family pets that are allowed undisciplined freedom. Often dogs that are confined by day go on a rampage of destruction when they are released after dark.

Their canine instinct urges them to group into packs of overly energetic predators. They incite each other into acts not otherwise expected of gentle family companions. Even the most loving pet can become dangerous after picking up a strange scent or catching the quick movement of a wild animal running across an open field.

Many times these incidents are witnessed by humans so there can be doubt the dog is responsible. After the chase, the dog quickly loses interest, abandons the dead or mortally wounded animal and dashes off to new adventures. This aggressive behavior, if encouraged or fortified, instills in the dog an underlying sense that this is acceptable behavior.

This urge to kill may be transferred from wildlife to home life, and future prey may be a domestic animal or even a child. There are few natural predators still at large that can bring down a fleet-footed fawn, and unlike a dog, a wild predator kills for the food it needs to survive.



Although, at times, the injuries are only superficial, yet the fawn usually dies. These delicate creatures cannot cope with the terror of the frenzied chase and capture. The inability to escape forces these innocent wild ones into shock, which is nature's way of providing wildlife with a means of escape from a painful, horrifying death. The public is generally unaware of the tragic circumstances under which Fawn Rescue receives these calls for help.

Fawns, squirrels, hare, raccoons, birds – all wildlife – are prey to unrestrained domestic animals. Each of us must take responsibility for our pets, keeping them under control as the law requires. These laws are essential to the welfare of wildlife whose lives are at risk. You may report a violation anonymously to Animal Regulation at (707) 565-7100 or to the California Department of Fish and Game, CalTIP, at 1-800-952-5400.