

Division of Wildlife Conservation
Ryan Scott, Director

Region I, Ketchikan Area Office
2030 Sea Level Drive, Suite 205
Ketchikan, AK 99901-6073



Alaska Department of Fish and Game
Doug Vincent-Lang, Commissioner

PO Box 115526
Juneau, AK 99811-5526
www.adfg.alaska.gov

Advisory Announcement

For Immediate Release: 19 May 2025

CONTACT: Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Wildlife Conservation, see below

What to do if you find "orphaned" animals

(19 May 2025) – With summer upon us more people will be heading outdoors to recreate. Undoubtedly, some people will come across young animals. Alaska law prohibits the taking or holding of live animals (including birds) without a permit from the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, so it's important to know what to do if you find a young animal that seems to be 'abandoned'.

Deer fawns will be born from late May to early June. As newborns, fawns are cute, and it can be hard to resist touching or picking them up. However, it is in their best interest not to be picked up or handled under any circumstances. Female deer will often leave their fawns for hours at a time while foraging, and a fawn without a mother in the immediate area is not necessarily abandoned or lost. It's likely that the mother is watching from a distance or will return later. If left alone, the fawn and mother will be reunited. If picked up and removed from the area, it's less likely that the doe will be reunited with the fawn.

Harbor seal pups are born between May and mid-July and may be found along beaches. Young pups are capable of swimming with their mothers almost immediately after birth. Pups are weaned at about one month after birth, separating from their mother to start their own life. If you see pups hauled out on a beach, dock, or elsewhere, please leave them alone. Stressing the seals by harassing them is not only harmful, it's illegal.

If you observe a young animal that appears to have been left alone for more than 48 hours, contact the nearest Alaska Department of Fish and Game office during regular business hours, or use the department's website link to file a report online by visiting <http://www.adfg.alaska.gov> and clicking the "Report a Wildlife Encounter" button.

Douglas: 907-465-4265
Ketchikan: 907-225-2475
Petersburg: 907-772-5228
Sitka: 907-747-5449

For Marine mammals that may be in distress please contact National Marine Fisheries Service Stranding hotline 1-877-925-7773.

For more information, visit www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=distressedwildlife.mammals.

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